George Michell provides a pioneering and richly illustrated introduction to the architecture, sculpture and painting of Southern India under the Vijayanagara empire and the states that succeeded it. This period, encompassing some four hundred years, from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century, was endowed with an abundance of religious and royal monuments which remain as testimonies to the history and ideology behind their evolution. The author evaluates the legacy of this artistic heritage, describing and illustrating buildings, sculptures and paintings that have never been published before. In a previously neglected area of art history, the author presents an original and much-needed reassessment.

THE NEW CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF INDIA

Architecture and art of Southern India

THE NEW CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF INDIA

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Krishnaraya and queens, brass, Venkateshvara temple, Tirumala, sixteenth century

THE NEW CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF INDIA

I : 6

Architecture and art of Southern India

Vijayanagara and the successor states

GEORGE MICHELL


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ILLUSTRATIONS

Abbreviations: AIIS, American Institute of Indian Studies; VRP, Vijayanagara Research Project.

Unless otherwise noted, photographs of objects in museum collections have been provided by the relevant institutions.

PREFACE

The idea of writing this volume for *The New Cambridge History of India* occurred to me while I was reading Burton Stein's account of the Vijayanagara period (1.2 in the current series). This work provided the historical background to a number of Southern Indian monuments and art works that I had been studying for some time. When I learned that two volumes had been commissioned in the same series on Mughal architecture and painting (1.3 and 1.4), it seemed that the time was right to attempt a similar survey for the Vijayanagara and Nayaka periods. My overriding intention was to produce a work that would form a useful companion to Burton Stein's masterly introduction, while at the same time complementing the volumes of Catherine Asher and Milo Cleveland Beach by presenting a more comprehensive picture of architecture and art traditions in the Subcontinent during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

It is perhaps no exaggeration to claim that this volume defines what is virtually a new chapter in the history of Indian art. I can only hope that the reader will appreciate the pioneering nature of this endeavour by taking advantage of the abundance of new data that is offered here, while simultaneously forgiving the somewhat summary approach that has been adopted in order to encompass the many monuments, sculptures and paintings that have been included here. Writing this book has been a rewarding experience because it has provided me with an opportunity for describing buildings and art objects that have rarely, if ever, been studied before. It is to be admitted, however, that the difficulties in understanding materials with little or no documentation have not always been overcome. Even so, there has been the satisfaction of bringing together much of the data that I have collected on past research trips to Southern India.

At the beginning of 1980 I initiated a survey of the ruined structures at the Vijayanagara site. Together with the archaeologist John M. Fritz and a host of collaborating scholars, young professionals and students, this project has continued into the 1990s. It is committed to completing an architectural inventory and archaeological reconnaissance of the central part of the city. A year spent as a Rockefeller Visiting Scholar at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, in 1988–9, permitted me to carry out research on Southern Indian art works in public and private collections. One outcome of this experience was the chance to act as curator of an exhibition of Southern Indian wooden sculpture at the Whitechapel Gallery, London; this

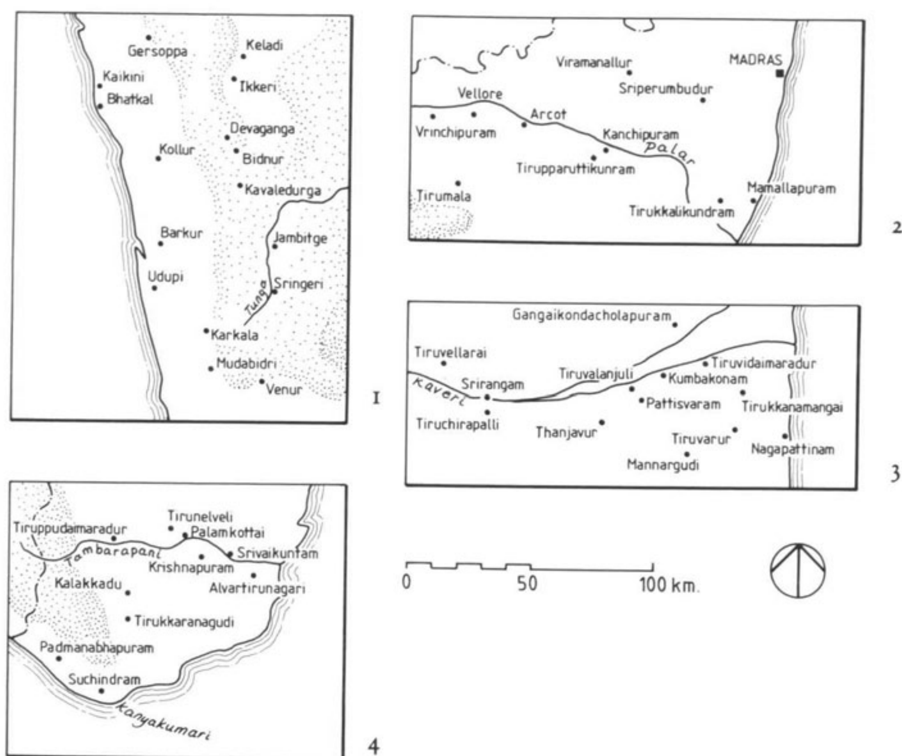
show took place in spring 1992. Subsequently, a commission to contribute chapters to the *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture* sponsored by the American Institute of Indian Studies, New Delhi, gave me the opportunity to spend four seasons, from the end of 1992 to the beginning of 1995, travelling extensively in the different states of Southern India.

This book could not have been written without the cooperation of a large number of people in India, Europe and the USA. Many scholars have been generous with their information and have taken time to discuss topics of common interest. I am particularly grateful to Arjun Appadurai, Carol Appadurai-Breckenridge, Vidya Dehejia, Jean Deloche, Devangana Desai, James Harle, Mary Beth Heston, Jean-François Hurpré, V. Jayaprada, Raju Kalidos, Hermann Kulke, R. Champakalakshmi, Françoise L'Hérnault, M.A. Dhaky, Nicolas Dirks, Mattiebelle Gittinger, Nina Wade-Dalton Gwatkin, William MacDonald, Jayaram Poduval, Valerie Roebuck, Vijayanath Shenoy, David Shulman, Robert Skelton, Jatinder Gurbax Singh, Martand Singh, Burton Stein, the late Barbara Stoler Miller, Shivaprayananda, Sanjay Subrahmanya, R. Vasantha, Anila Verghese, Chitra Viji and Phillip Wagoner. I have also benefited from data supplied by archaeologists, such as Balasubrahmanya, V.V. Krishna Sashtri, M.S. Nagaraja Rao, S. Nagaraju, R. Nagaswamy, B. Narasimhaiah, C.S. Patil, K. Poonacha, S. Rajasekhara, K.V. Raman, K.V. Ramesh, M.D. Sampath, L.K. Srinivasan, A. Sundara, K.M. Suresh and M.V. Visvesvara.

I am indebted to several museum directors and curators and private collectors who have permitted me to examine objects in their collections. Among these are David Alexander, Terese Bartholomew, Milo Cleveland Beach, Chhote Bharany, Richard Blurton, Michael Brand, Stephen Cossack, Joe Cribb, Rosemary Crill, Vishaka Desai, Joseph M. Dye, S. Gorakshakar, John Guy, Robert Hales, Robert Knox, Martin Lerner, Terry McInerney, Peter Marks, Jagdish Mittal, D. Natesan, Pratapaditya Pal, G.N. Pant, Cynthia Polsky, Amy Poster, Krishna Riboud, Gursharam S. Sidhu, Kuldip Singh, Michael Spink, Deborah Swallow, Andrew Topsfield, Stuart Cary Welch and Hiram Woodward. Photographic help has come from D.P. Nanda and V.K. Rajamani; the expert maps are by Graham Reed.

It would have been impossible for me to have continued working on Southern Indian topics over the last few years without constant support from my fellow researchers and travelling companions, John M. Fritz and Anna Libera Dallapiccola. To these two dear friends I offer my special thanks. Nor should I neglect to thank N.K. Chandrashekhara, my trusty driver, who has over the years conducted me to most of the sites and monuments described in this study.

Principal monuments and sites of Southern India



Areas of Southern India with the greatest concentration of monuments and sites: *1* western Kannada zone; *2* northern Tamil zone; *3* central Tamil zone (Kaveri Delta); *4* southern Tamil zone

PLACE NAMES

City and town names in Southern India are commonly rendered in a wide range of spellings, some of which preserve nineteenth-century British usage. There is no attempt here to bring this linguistic confusion into a single system; to the contrary, place names follow common practice, as is reflected in contemporary maps and road signs. Significant variations, however, are given in the first mention of a particular place in the text, permitting concordance with other works of reference.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The overall aim of this volume is to provide an introduction to the architecture and art of Southern India under the Vijayanagara empire and the lesser kingdoms that succeeded it. The chronological span of the survey opens with the foundation of Vijayanagara in the middle of the fourteenth century and closes with the decline of the successor states in the middle of the eighteenth century. The most important of these successor states were founded by the Nayakas, originally governors under the Vijayanagara emperors; but other figures also emerged as independent rulers towards the end of this era.

As an attempt to encompass one aspect of Southern Indian culture in these centuries, this study contributes to what is now a well-established field of enquiry. Historians are among the first to have recognised the significance of the Vijayanagara and Nayaka periods. They have reconsidered the political structure of the empire, investigated the peasant economy of large land holdings, and examined the accounts of the lucrative overseas trade. Historians of religion constitute another group of scholars that has turned to Southern India in these centuries. Their documentation of cult shrines and rites of worship, as well as of myths and legends, has gone far to reveal the rich diversity of religious traditions that flourished at this time, and indeed continues to do so today. The most recent wave of interest seems to be directed towards an anthropology of courtly culture, particularly under the Nayakas and their contemporaries. Translations of royal epics and poems provide new perspectives on the lives and ideals of Southern Indian rulers and courtiers. Such enquiries contribute to an understanding of the historical, religious and cultural context of buildings and their associated sculptures and paintings. They have not, however, received the attention that they deserve.

NEGLECT OF THE SUBJECT

Scholarly disregard of architecture and art under the Vijayanagara and Nayaka dynasties is not easy to understand. A large number of monuments survives from the era, particularly temples, many in a fine state of preservation and still in use; there is an abundance of stone and metal sculptures, and painted panels and cloths, either on permanent display in their original settings or preserved in public and private collections. Furthermore, much is known about the background of many buildings and works of art in this era; a wealth of inscriptions and documents provides information on donors and dates. If this

abundance of data has not attracted scholarly attention over the years, then other factors must be involved in order to account for the obviously negative impact of the Vijayanagara and Nayaka periods on art historians.

The first and most obvious explanation for this indifference is the periodisation of the subject itself. Scholars concerned with 'Buddhist' and 'Hindu' phases of Indian architecture, sculpture and painting tend to ignore the later centuries since they fall within what is considered to be the 'Islamic period'. Meanwhile, scholars involved with the architecture and fine arts of the Muslim courts of Northern India and the Deccan regard contemporary practice in the Hindu courts of Southern India to fall outside their area of interest. In this way, the architecture and art of the Vijayanagara and Nayaka periods are situated between two well-defined disciplines, lacking any credibility as a valid subject in their own right.

But there are other, less tangible reasons why this particular tradition has failed to command notice. Historians of Indian art generally express a preference for earlier phases, especially in their search for the origins of architectural forms and iconic motifs. The prejudice against what is perceived as 'late' is intensified when it comes to 'Hindu' architecture and sculpture. Most scholars who have considered the architecture and art of Southern India have been reluctant to advance beyond the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a time which coincided with the finest achievements of the Hoysalas and Cholas. Underlying this oversight is an assumption that Vijayanagara and Nayaka monuments and art works are unworthy of study. The hidden argument seems to focus on what are perceived as repetitive and derivative modes of production which are only too readily interpreted as mechanical and, therefore, devoid of artistic inspiration. Such assumptions accord with widely held theories of style, in which 'later' periods are judged as inferior in quality. However, as studies of 'late' phases in other art historical contexts have demonstrated, suppositions about stylistic 'decline' cannot usually be sustained.

It is worth pointing out that this art historical prejudice against the Vijayanagara and Nayaka periods has not always existed. One of the first champions of Indian architecture, James Fergusson, wrote perceptively about later Southern Indian styles. The measured plans that he published of the religious complexes at Srirangam and Rameswaram, for instance, are still the only ones available. Robert Fellowes Chisholm, another early pioneer, made detailed surveys of the palaces at Chandragiri and Madurai, personally supervising restoration work. As for sculpture, only in general studies of iconic forms, such as that of Gopinatha Rao, is any number of stone and metal images from these later centuries included.

Several unavoidable obstacles inherent in the subject account for the continuing reluctance of scholars to tackle the art traditions of this era. With a

few exceptions, the major temples of the era lack specialised monographs to provide complete transcripts of epigraphical records, illustrations of architecture and sculpture, and accurate drawings of overall layouts. Among those monuments that have recently been covered are the Rama temple at Vijayanagara, documented by an international team of scholars, including the present author, and the Arunachaleshvara temple at Tiruvannamalai, published by members of the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient at Pondicherry. Many other shrines of equal historic and artistic interest await serious attention. One factor that has proved a deterrent to most researchers is the sheer scale of temple complexes and the profusion of carvings and paintings. Another obstacle has been the ongoing modification of religious structures, a process that has concealed and even destroyed original sculptures and paintings. The fact that many of these are 'living temples', crowded with priests and worshippers engaged in daily celebrations, may have further discouraged documentation work.

The linguistic capabilities required for this subject are demanding, and a knowledge of no less than three Southern Indian languages is essential. Only a small fraction of the thousands of epigraphs available for the monuments have been translated; many are not even adequately published in indigenous languages. Cycles of narrative paintings, both on temple ceilings and on cloth hangings, are often supplied with labels identifying the principal scenes and characters; such annotations await transcription and translation.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The chronological dimensions of Southern India relevant to this investigation have already been outlined, but the relevant geographical parameters need also to be clarified from the outset. The region under consideration encompasses all of the Subcontinental peninsula south of the Krishna River, from the uplands of the Deccan plateau to Kanyakumari (Cape Comorin) (see Maps, pp. xxii–xxiii). This territory almost exactly coincides with the greatest extent of the Vijayanagara empire in the middle of the sixteenth century, being no less than 800 kilometres from north to south, and 600 kilometres from east to west.

The region embraces four major linguistic groups: the southern portions of the Kannada and Telugu zones, broadly corresponding with parts of the modern states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, respectively, and all of the Tamil and Malayalam zones, which comprise the modern states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. These different zones are distinguished here by their respective languages, but they are by no means homogeneous; certain tracts of Southern India are bilingual today as they were in the past. There is no clear boundary between the Kannada and Telugu zones which, instead, merge imperceptibly in the Deccan plains. These two zones are often treated together in this study,

particularly in the discussion of temple architecture. The demarcation of the Telugu and Tamil zones is more problematic since these two languages have profoundly intermingled over the centuries. Tamil inscriptions cover monuments in the southern part of the Telugu zone; Telugu labels accompany paintings on temples in many parts of the Tamil zone.

Not quite all of Southern India is covered by this study. The Arabian Sea littoral never came entirely within the orbit of the Vijayanagara empire or the Nayaka kingdoms. This is explained by the geographical isolation of the coastal strip, much of which is cut off from the remainder of the peninsula by the steeply wooded hills of the Western Ghats. The Malayalam zone of Kerala enjoyed a fair degree of autonomy throughout these centuries, benefiting from lucrative ocean trade with Arabs, later with Europeans. The architecture and art of this region are correspondingly independent, exhibiting only occasional connections with developments elsewhere in Southern India; for this reason they are referred to only incidentally. A quite different situation exists for the coastal strip further north. Known as Kanara, this part of the Kannada zone was one of the richest provinces of the Vijayanagara empire; its architecture and art form an important part of this study.

Limitations other than geographical ones are also incorporated here. Certain categories of data, for example, have had to be excluded, including buildings in non-indigenous, intrusive styles. Mosques and tombs erected by the Sultans of Madurai in the southernmost part of the Tamil zone during the course of the fourteenth century do not appear. Neither do the monuments constructed by the Nawabs of Arcot in the northern part of the Tamil zone and by the Muslim usurpers of the Mysore throne in the Kannada zone, all of which postdate the middle of the eighteenth century. Christian architecture is also omitted. In spite of the long-standing tradition of church building in the area, going back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in both the Tamil and Malayalam zones, most surviving examples were extensively remodelled in later times. Some churches have elaborately carved wooden altarpieces that imitate Iberian Baroque models of the era.

The cutoff date adopted here has necessitated the exclusion of a number of categories of Southern Indian painting. Portable panels depicting mythological subjects executed in styles associated with the schools of Mysore and Thanjavur cannot be dated prior to the end of the eighteenth century and are, therefore, not included. Ceiling panels in temples at Sibi and Holalagundi, and murals in the Jain monastery at Sravana Belgola are similarly late in date and have not been included. Paintings on cotton intended for European or South-East Asian clients fall outside the confines of this study. Huge quantities of such textiles were exported in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from ports on the Bay of Bengal seaboard, better known to the Europeans as the Coromandel coast.

PLAN OF THE STUDY

In spite of such limitations of data, the volume makes some claim to completeness since it deals with the broadest possible range of monuments and art objects. The overall scarcity of documentation for buildings, sculptures and paintings in Southern India during these centuries suggests the suitability of an overall descriptive approach, with comprehensive chapters focusing on the most important examples.

Chapter 2 sets these varied materials within an appropriate chronological framework by outlining the overall historical trends of the Vijayanagara and Nayaka periods. Acknowledging the break with pre-Vijayanagara traditions, the chapter presents a straightforward approach to the rise and fall of the principal ruling dynasties of Southern India. A complex hierarchy of rulers emerges as a characteristic feature of the era. Many of the royal personalities mentioned in this discussion take on importance as patrons of architecture and art works.

Chapters 3 and 4 are devoted to temple architecture in Southern India; even so, they describe only a handful of the very large number of religious monuments that survives from this era. The chapters distinguish temples in the Kannada and Telugu zones from those in the Tamil zone. This separation is partly justified by geographic and historic considerations; the presence of local building traditions further underscores this separation of material. Both chapters treat the temples chronologically, beginning with the relatively modest projects of the Vijayanagara era and concluding with the ambitious complexes of the Nayakas and their subordinates. The overall growth in scale and elaboration in these centuries was only possible by sustained investment in religious architecture, a process that is particularly noticeable in the Tamil zone.

Military and royal constructions, particularly forts and palaces, form the subject of Chapter 5. Unfortunately, only isolated examples are available for study, and these are either incomplete and ruined or much altered by restoration. The chapter directs attention to the formal and technical features derived from the architecture of the Sultanate kingdoms of the Deccan. The synthesis of styles that characterises palace architecture at Vijayanagara is proposed as a major artistic achievement. The 'Islamic' appearance of these royal structures is shown to be deceptive, since all of these pavilions, watchtowers, bath-houses and stables are entirely original in design. The integration of different building types and decorative features testifies to the invention of the Vijayanagara architects.

Almost all known stone and metal sculptures from these centuries were intended for religious settings; but this does not mean that they were necessarily restricted to depictions of gods and goddesses. Chapter 6 describes

the principal divinities in Southern Indian sculptures, as well as a host of accessory figures, from saints, ascetics and saviours to armed guardians and seductive maidens. Narration is a significant component, with carved reliefs illustrating legendary episodes. Royal themes are accorded a special importance. The development of portraiture, in which rulers and their families are shown in devotional attitudes, is an outstanding innovation of the era. Another contribution of temple sculpture in these centuries is the emphasis on martial themes, nowhere better illustrated than in the mounted riders and rearing beasts that line halls and corridors. Nor is the chapter limited to large-scale compositions: miniature bronzes and ivory figurines and relief panels are also included; so, too, steel weapons and standards.

Southern India painting in these centuries occurs on plastered ceilings and walls, on cotton scrolls and hangings, and on paper manuscripts and albums. In marked contrast to this diversity of locations and media, there is an overall unity of subject matter, particularly in respect to the choice of sacred topics. Chapter 7 records the appearance of painted mythological scenes in temples and palaces, as well as in a wide range of portable, small-scale items. Like sculpture, narrative art in the religious context is closely linked to local legends. Labels are often employed to identify major episodes and principal figures. Rulers accompanied by women and armed retinues are also depicted in the pictorial art of this era, either on palace walls or on brightly coloured cloth hangings. Like votive portraits installed in temples, these illustrations of royal life are a significant artistic innovation.

Chapter 8, which serves as a conclusion, draws attention to common developments in Southern Indian architecture, sculpture and painting. Three basic stylistic processes are isolated, stressing the tendencies towards revivalism, innovation and integration in architecture and the arts. A number of unifying themes are also pinpointed, especially those contributing towards artistic coherence. The interaction between these stylistic processes and unifying themes is proposed as a determining factor, contributing to the distinctive artistic personality of the age. The chapter ends with an estimate of the legacy of Southern India architecture and art in later times.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

The four hundred years or so under review in this volume delimit a remarkable sequence of events: the formation, climax and disintegration of the Vijayanagara empire, and the opportunity that this process gave for lesser kingdoms to achieve independence. The varied careers of the different states of Southern India in this period provide an overall historical framework for the buildings and art works to be discussed in the following chapters. The appropriateness of a dynastic approach is suggested by the many monuments and attendant sculptures and paintings that are directly linked with known reigning figures, their family members, commanders and governors. For this reason dynastic appellations are generally retained, especially for religious and royal monuments. But this should not be taken to mean that artistic developments at this time invariably coincided with dynastic history; considerable difficulties occur when assigning a precise chronology to certain phases of artistic activity, particularly painting and the minor arts.

The history of Southern India from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries is relatively well established and there is little need here to give more than the bare outlines of the major dynasties together with their prominent ruling personalities; even so, it is important to recognise the overall trends of the era. As the centuries progressed, larger states with some measure of political unity tended to collapse, thereby creating opportunities for smaller states to emerge. These smaller kingdoms were generally unable to bond together into larger political units, since they were mostly engaged in territorial conflicts with one another. This pattern of disintegration was repeated at different levels: in the sixteenth century, Vijayanagara fragmented into the smaller Nayaka kingdoms; in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was the turn of the Nayaka kingdoms to break apart. These post-Vijayanagara principalities are referred to here as 'successor states'.

This historical situation was complicated by the uneasy relationship that existed throughout much of this era between the rulers of Southern India and the Sultans of the Deccan kingdoms that lay to the north of the Krishna. The strife spanned almost three hundred years and had its consequence in a series of invasions by the forces of the Deccan Sultans, the Marathas and the Mughals. The conflicts that led to these conquests were occasioned by expansionist policies, almost never by differences in religion. The prolonged duration of these troubles gave ample opportunity for social and cultural interchanges between Southern India and the Deccan which were to have

significant repercussions in architecture and the arts. This is most strikingly illustrated in the syncretistic style adopted for courtly monuments at the various capitals of the Vijayanagara and Nayaka rulers (see Chapter 5). An additional factor affecting historical trends in this era was the arrival of European traders in Southern India during the course of the sixteenth century. In spite of the decided impact that these foreigners had on economic life in the region, there is little evidence of artistic influence other than in objects specifically manufactured for export, such as cotton textiles.

POWER AND PATRONAGE

In the discussion that follows there is a repeated use of the terms 'empire' and 'kingdom'; these require some explanation. An analysis of the historical conditions that pertain to Southern India in these centuries reveals a limited degree of political cohesion. Only rarely did rulers enjoy complete and total control over their territories; usually they were challenged by their governors and commanders who made repeated and sometimes successful bids for autonomy. Southern Indian states were not, therefore, truly unified kingdoms with effective centralised commands. Some historians, notably Burton Stein, have argued that they were little more than composite states with no overall bureaucratic or administrative organisation. Stein believes that political coherence relied upon complementary sets of relationships between rulers and their representatives. According to the 'segmentary' view that he proposes, Vijayanagara, the greatest of all Southern Indian empires, should not be understood as monolithic. Rather, it was a complex polity based upon a balance of forces, often more precarious than stable, between the Vijayanagara emperors at the capital and their representatives at the provincial centres. Some viceroys were in fact directly related to the rulers themselves, often being younger members of the royal household, an important factor in the attempts of the Vijayanagara emperors to disperse their influence over large tracts of territory.

The Vijayanagara state incorporated a wide spectrum of local chiefs and warriors, especially in more remote and less populated districts. Their position was based partly on the authority invested in them by the emperors; in turn, the Vijayanagara monarchs often relied upon the financial and military support from these lesser figures, who were expected to remit taxes and to contribute arms, troops and war-animals on demand. This mutual dependency of rulers and their subordinates is an outstanding historical feature of the era, replicated in all of the successor states. In spite of the reduction in scale and resources of these later kingdoms, they too were based on the same reciprocal networks and interrelationships.

This widespread distribution of power is of particular consequence for the

development of the arts during this era. Such circumstances encouraged individuals at different levels to give visible form to their political ambitions by acting as artistic patrons. The profusion of building projects sponsored by emperors and kings, as well as their ministers, governors and commanders, may be interpreted within a wider political context as acts intended to reinforce claims to authority. In this respect, patronage of the arts mirrored the wide spectrum of contemporary power affiliations. This is particularly true of monumental architecture in the religious context, an obvious venue for conspicuous displays of might and wealth. Nowhere is this better shown than at the Vijayanagara capital where schemes sponsored by the Vijayanagara emperors were improved and amplified by powerful individuals, especially ministers and commanders (see Chapter 3).

Since building construction was a permanent demonstration of strength and resources, lesser figures did not hesitate to express their political aspirations by erecting shrines and temples that approached, and sometimes even rivalled in scale and splendour, those of greater personalities. In exactly this way, Govinda Dikshita, chief minister of the Thanjavur rulers in the second half of the sixteenth century, came to erect grander temples than those sponsored by the Nayakas themselves (see Chapter 4). Sculptures and painting also served to establish a political presence by means of a specific imagery intended to represent the patron and his family. The gallery of carved figures at Madurai serves as dynastic history of the Nayakas, presided over by Tirumala, sponsor of the whole project (see Chapter 6). Painted compositions on ceilings and walls provided yet other means of portraying powerful individuals, generally in the presence of temple deities (see Chapter 7).

FOUNDATION OF EMPIRE

The era under consideration opens with an unprecedented calamity for Southern India: the invasion of the region at the turn of the fourteenth century by Malik Kafur, general of Alauddin, Sultan of Delhi. Malik Kafur's forces brought to an abrupt end all of the indigenous ruling houses of Southern India, not one of which was able to withstand the assault or outlive the conquest. Virtually every city of importance in the Kannada, Telugu and Tamil zones succumbed to the raids of Malik Kafur; forts were destroyed, palaces dismantled and temple sanctuaries wrecked in the search for treasure. In order to consolidate the rapidly won gains of this pillage, Malik Kafur established himself in 1323 at Madurai (Madura) in the southernmost part of the Tamil zone, former capital of the Pandyas who were dislodged by the Delhi forces. Madurai thereupon became the capital of the Ma'bar (Malabar) province of the Delhi empire.

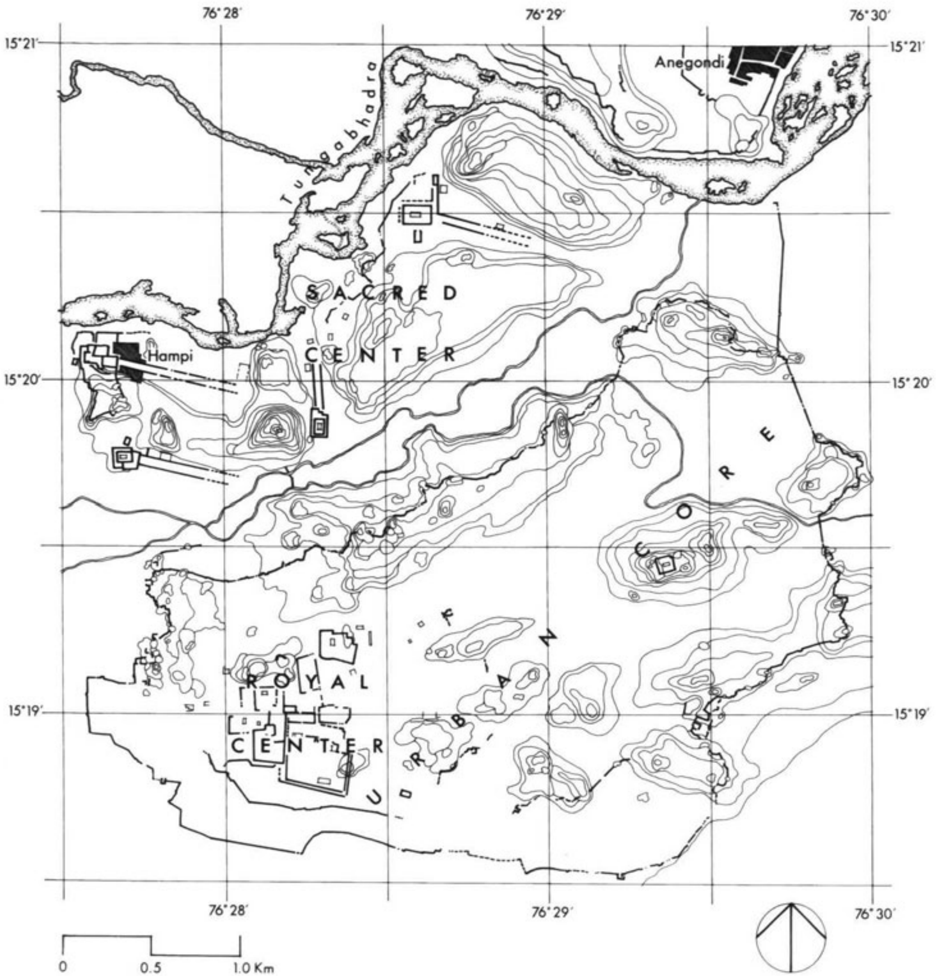
Soon after, in 1334, troubles compelled the Delhi ruler, Muhammad

Tughluq, to recall the army from Southern India to assist in wars elsewhere. The results were twofold: the governor of Madurai proclaimed himself ruler of an independent Sultanate, while the remainder of Southern India was plunged into what was, in effect, a power vacuum. Such circumstances offered a unique moment for local figures to seize power, as was demonstrated by the sudden appearance of the five Sangama brothers. The origins of the Sangamas has long been debated. Recent research suggests that they may have been officers in the service of Kampila, a chief who controlled a sparsely populated domain in the Kannada-Telugu country in the heart of the Deccan, and who was killed in 1327 in the struggles with the invaders. Kampila's fortified citadel was located in the granite hills a short distance to the north of the sacred site of Hampi on the Tungabhadra River.

Under the skilled leadership of two of the five brothers, Harihara I (1336–54) and Bukka I (1354–77), the Sangamas rapidly established themselves as the most powerful figures in Southern India. Their headquarters were at Hampi, which they transformed into Vijayanagara, City of Victory, the greatest of all fortified citadels in this era (see Chapter 5). The appropriateness of this name for the new capital soon became evident as the Sangamas extended their authority beyond the immediate confines of the Tungabhadra valley into the southern areas of the Kannada and Telugu zones. Among their first acts was to visit the monastery at Sringeri, a monastic site in the forested hills south-west of their capital, where they sought the support of Vidyaranya, the local pontiff. Under Harihara II (1377–1404), the Sangama territories were further enlarged to encompass much of the Tamil region and even portions of the Arabian Sea coastal strip, thereby bringing a substantial part of Southern India under the control of Vijayanagara.

The campaigns in the Tamil zone, which from 1358 onwards were led by Kumara Kampana, son of Bukka, culminated in the expulsion of the Madurai king in 1371. The Sultanate threat to the Sangamas was, however, by no means at an end since by this time the Bahmani state had been founded with its capital at Gulbarga, about 250 kilometres north of the Tungabhadra. Disagreements over the control of the fertile lands that lay between the Bahmani and Vijayanagara centres led to a series of wars that was to engage the attentions of the Sangamas from this time onwards. Further threats to their authority came from rival Southern Indian leaders, many of whom had to be forcibly persuaded to acknowledge Sangama supremacy. In spite of these assaults, the Vijayanagara state assumed imperial proportions, and the Sangamas responded by adopting the title of Raya, or emperor. Political and cultural life continued to be focused on the Vijayanagara capital.

The exceptional political success of the Sangamas was due not only to the sheer strength of their forces but also to their ability to adapt to new military techniques, such as those introduced into Southern India by the Delhi army.



1 Plan of Vijayanagara

The Rayas imposed a system of tribute throughout their empire that yielded sufficient revenues to support an impressive militia and to maintain a number of defensive outposts. Vijayanagara itself was built up into a veritable fortress, as well as a showpiece of imperial magnificence, with a fine series of courtly and religious monuments laid out in the clearly distinguished royal centre and sacred centre (Fig. 1). Important religious establishments at other sites were repaired and enlarged, as can be seen, almost 300 kilometres east of the capital at the pilgrimage shrine of Srisailam in the wooded hills of the eastern Telugu zone (Chapter 3).

CONSOLIDATION OF EMPIRE

Though bothered by the recurring troubles with the Bahmanis, the Rayas enjoyed virtual supremacy in Southern India throughout the fifteenth century. Wars with the Bahmani Sultans and with the Gajapati Rajas, the latter ruling the lands that lay north-east of the Vijayanagara frontier, were a regular feature of the reigns of Devaraya I (1404–22) and Devaraya II (1423–46). Prolonged sieges and daring raids were common during these decades, but there were no decisive conquests on either side. Meanwhile, Vijayanagara expanded further to incorporate all of the Tamil zone and parts of the Arabian Sea coastal strip, including Kanara and Malabar to the north and Venad in the extreme south. Sangama rule under Devaraya II attained the apex of military strength. That this was also an era of unprecedented courtly splendour is revealed by the chronicle of Abdul Razzaq, Persian envoy to the capital in 1443.

Vijayanagara's hegemony was partly eroded under Mallikarjuna (1447–65). The weakness of this ruler permitted various subordinates to increase their powers. The ambitions of Narasimha Saluva, commander of Chandragiri, an important citadel in the wooded hills on the eastern fringe of the Telugu zone, brought about a conflict of interests. This had its consequence in the invasion of Vijayanagara territory by Kapileshvara, the Gajapati ruler, whose forces laid siege to the capital in 1485 before advancing into the Tamil zone. Mallikarjuna was unable to halt this progress, thereby providing Narasimha Saluva with an excuse to take over the imperial forces. Though Narasimha did not at first declare formal usurpation, he ensured that authority was steadily removed from the Rayas; Mallikarjuna and his successor, Virupaksha II (1465–86), ruled only in name.

As the Sangamas were being deprived of their influence from inside their empire, there were also threats from outside. To the north, Bahmani influence reached its climax under the sway of Mahmud Gawan, capable minister of Shamsuddin Muhammad III (1463–82), who in 1470 managed to take control of the Vijayanagara holdings on the Arabian Sea coast, including the port of Goa. On the east, the Gajapatis were firmly established; while in the south, there was a rebellion of lesser chiefs. These assaults led to the disintegration of the Sangama empire.

In the last years of Virupaksha's reign, Narasimha commanded nearly the whole of the eastern half of the empire. Even so, he was unable to withstand a raid by the Bahmanis in 1481 that led to a temporary occupation of the Tamil zone; nor could he recover Goa and the other ports that had been lost to the Bahmanis. On the death of Virupaksha, Narasimha took control of the army and occupied the imperial throne at Vijayanagara, proclaiming himself Raya. In this way, the second dynasty of Vijayanagara, that of the Saluvas, came into being.

Under Narasimha, whose reign extended until 1493, most of the lands of Vijayanagara were recovered and the stability of the central government restored. This ruler encouraged the Arab trade in horses, and was an active sponsor of temple building. The Vitthala complex at the capital may have been the major religious foundation of his era (see Chapter 3). One factor in Narasimha's rise to power was the corresponding decline of the Bahmani kingdom which in the last decades of the fifteenth century broke up into smaller states. Two of the Sultanate successor states were to be of particular importance for the later history of Southern India: the Adil Shahis of Bijapur in the Kannada zone north of the Tungabhadra, and the Qutb Shahis of Golconda in the Telugu zone further to the north-east.

The remainder of Narasimha's reign, as well as all of that of his successor, Narasimha II (1493–1507), were marred by repeated wars between Vijayanagara and the Adil Shahis. The Saluva grasp of power within the empire became precarious and many subordinates began to rebel. Most of these lesser figures were contained by Narasa Nayaka, commander of the Vijayanagara army, who conducted extensive campaigns in the Tamil and Kannada zones in 1497–8. This was just prior to the arrival of Vasco da Gama in Goa in 1498, an event which signalled the beginning of Portuguese domination of the Arabian Sea coast.

CLIMAX OF EMPIRE AND CATASTROPHE OF 1565

In 1501, Narasa Nayaka seized the Vijayanagara throne to rule as Vira Narasimha. His heir and eldest son, Vira Narasimha II (1503–9), was the first of the truly powerful emperors of the Tuluva family that constituted the third dynasty of Vijayanagara. Battles with the last of the Bahmani Sultans in 1502 and 1506 ended in payments of tribute and the loss of strategic forts. Narasimha II signed a treaty with the Portuguese, the first between a Vijayanagara ruler and a European power.

Krishnaraya (1510–29), son of Narasimha II, ascended to the Vijayanagara throne at the death of his father. Krishnaraya made a far-reaching expedition in the Tamil zone in 1512, settling the amounts that lesser chiefs were expected to pay and posting Telugu chiefs in charge of the important provinces of Gingee, Thanjavur and Madurai. These governors came to be known throughout the empire as Nayakas. Once the southern part of the empire had been secured, Krishnaraya turned his attention to the north, and made advances into the territories of the Adil Shahis and Qutb Shahis. Citadels that had previously been lost to the Sultans, such as Udayagiri, were recaptured. A campaign directed against the Gajapatis in 1515–16 put an end once and for all to the threat from the north-east. The Krishna temple erected at the capital on Krishnaraya's return commemorates the victory of the Vijayanagara forces on

this occasion (see Chapter 3). The battles with the Qutb Shahis that took place during these years were generally settled to the advantage of the Vijayanagara forces. Krishnaraya went on pilgrimage to the principal temples of the Telugu and Tamil zones in 1516–17, making conspicuous grants and gifts. The architectural consequences of these benefactions are seen at Kalahasti in the Telugu zone and at Chidambaram in the Tamil lands (see Chapters 3 and 6).

Once the dangers of external and internal disruptions had been laid to rest, the administration of the empire was thoroughly remodelled, particularly in revenue matters and in the training of the army; firearms seem to have been introduced in Southern India at about this time. In this work, the services of Saluva Timmaiah, Krishnaraya's chief minister, were indispensable. The wealth of the empire reached new limits, and the Vijayanagara court was unrivalled in ostentation according to the eye-witness account of Domingo Paes, a Portuguese horse-trader. The most important annual occasion at the capital was the Mahanavami festival to which all of the chiefs and governors of the empire were summoned to pay tribute to the emperor. Paes gives an animated account of the spectacular royal rites, processions and entertainments that took place on this occasion. Ceremonial platforms and courtly friezes on various monuments testify to the impact of the Mahanavami on Vijayanagara's art and architecture (see Chapters 3 and 5).

Though wars with the Deccan Sultans did not diminish during the later years of Krishnaraya's reign, Tuluva supremacy in Southern India was sustained. At the death of this emperor, his half-brother, Achyutaraya, was at Chandragiri; he hastened to temples at nearby Tirumala and Kalahasti to have himself anointed before celebrating his coronation at the capital itself. But Achyutaraya's succession was not favourably received by all parties. Krishnaraya's sons-in-law, Sadashiva and Venkatadri, had their own ambitions; the result was temporary confusion in the affairs of state.

Achyutaraya's reign (1529–42) was marked by increasing aggression on the part of the Adil Shahis and Qutb Shahis who steadily encroached upon territories previously taken by Vijayanagara. An expedition to the Tamil and Telugu countries in 1532–3 successfully quelled rebellious chiefs, while serving as an excuse to visit important holy places and make conspicuous gifts. Achyutaraya fixed his camp at Tiruchirapalli on the Kaveri River, near to the temples on Srirangam Island, from where he subdued the southernmost provinces of the Tamil zone. A description of Achyutaraya's court at Vijayanagara is given by Fernao Nuniz, another Portuguese visitor.

The succession dispute that broke out on the death of Achyutaraya was resolved by installing Sadashiva, a mere child, under the protection of Rama, son-in-law of Krishnaraya. Even though Rama continued to rule in the name of Sadashiva Raya (1543–69), it was he who wielded true authority throughout the empire up until the events of 1565. Rama's brothers, Tirumala and

Venkatadri, served as chief minister and commander of the Vijayanagara forces, respectively. Difficulties with the Adil Shahis increased during these years, and there were no less than four major confrontations, ending with the siege of Bijapur in 1553; similar engagements with the Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar, another of the Deccan kingdoms, led to the humiliation of the Sultans. Alliances with the Portuguese were attempted, but did not last. The era also witnessed the visit of Francis Xavier and the beginning of the spread of Roman Catholicism in Southern India.

By 1563, Rama Raya, as he was known by this time, had reached the height of his power. His ruthless dealings with the Sultans, however, led to an unprecedented union of the armies of the Deccan kingdoms. War was declared and in January 1565 the Vijayanagara troops were overwhelmed by the combined Bijapur, Golconda and Ahmadnagar forces. Rama Raya was killed and Tirumala ordered the surviving troops to retreat to Vijayanagara where they gathered up the imperial treasury and captured the emperor. They then fled to Penukonda, almost 200 kilometres to the south-east. Meanwhile, the capital, which was left undefended, was occupied and thoroughly sacked by the invading troops, supposedly over a period of six months.

Tirumala immediately appointed himself regent of the empire. In 1567 he returned briefly to Vijayanagara, but soon after shifted permanently to Penukonda which was situated at a more suitable distance away from the main arena of conflict. In this way, the first and greatest Vijayanagara capital was abandoned forever. The loss of the city and the lands north of the Tungabhadra, which were never to be recovered, signified the beginning of Vijayanagara's decline.

The murder of Sadashiva brought the Tuluva line to an end. In spite of rebellions that spread throughout the empire, Tirumala had himself crowned at Penukonda in 1569 as Tirumaladeva Raya, first of the Aravidu line that constituted the fourth and final dynasty of Vijayanagara. The name Vijayanagara was generally retained for the empire, even though the city itself by now lay beyond the area of direct control. Raids by the Adil Shahis and Qutb Shahis continued during the reign of Tirumala's heir, Shrirangadeva Raya I (1572–86). This emperor was also crowned at Penukonda, which had by this time been built up as an imperial seat. In the battle of 1576, Shrirangadeva was captured by the Bijapur Sultan, his life being assured only by relinquishing the provinces north of Penukonda. The year 1579 witnessed an invasion by the Qutb Shahis, with the consequent loss of further provinces.

At the death of Tirumala, the Tamil country was under the viceroyalty of Venkata, youngest brother of Shrirangadeva, based at Chandragiri. Simultaneously, Rama, another brother, was overlord of the Kannada region which he controlled from the island fort at Srirangapattana (Seringapatan) on the upper reaches of the Kaveri. Venkata, Shrirangadeva's successor, was crowned

emperor at Chandragiri and thereafter ruled as Venkatapatideva Raya (1586–1614). The first headquarters of this emperor were at Penukonda, already established as the seat of the Aravidus. But the emperor was only directly in charge of the lands belonging to the provinces of Penukonda, Chandragiri, Vellore (Velur) and Srirangapattana. The remainder of the kingdom was in effect under the immediate charge of the Nayakas of the Kannada and Tamil zone. To the north, the empire continued to be encroached upon by the Adil Shahis and Qutb Shahis whose raids continued throughout Venkatapatideva's reign; to the south and west, many of the imperial provinces had taken on the aspect of semi-autonomous kingdoms. Among the local governors who maintained close contacts with the Vijayanagara throne but who tried to assert their independence was Chinna Bomma of Vellore, an important and well-fortified centre guarding the northern approaches to the Tamil zone.

EMERGENCE OF THE SUCCESSOR STATES

It was under the Tuluvas in the first half of the sixteenth century that the first of the warrior chiefs from the Telugu region were posted as Nayakas at the strategic centres of Gingee, Thanjavur and Madurai. After the events of 1565 and the consequent diminution of the Vijayanagara territories these viceroys were able to consolidate their armies and fortunes. In spite of their aspirations, the Nayakas continued to affirm their loyalties to the Aravidu kings.

Gingee (Senji, Jinji) was the most northerly of the Nayaka headquarters and the one closest to Chandragiri. Tubaki Krishnappa, who was installed at Gingee during the period of Krishnaraya, was the first Nayaka to convert the fort into an outstanding example of military architecture. He was succeeded by Achyuta Vijayaramachandra and Mutialu, whose governorships roughly corresponded with the reigns of Achyutaraya and Sadashiva, respectively. Krishnappa II was a contemporary of Venkatapatideva, and was already in command when this Raya ascended to the throne. Krishnappa was the most long lived of the Gingee Nayakas and certainly the most influential. Many courtly structures that still stand in the fort are assigned to his reign (see Chapter 5).

The Thanjavur Nayakas were placed in charge of the Kaveri Delta region under Achyutaraya. Shivappa Nayaka (1549–72), the first of this line of governors, had already served together with his father in the campaigns of Krishnaraya. Shevappa repaired the fort at Thanjavur, and in the early 1570s made donations to important temples throughout the province, as well as receiving visits from Portuguese missionaries. For a time he shared the governorship with his son, Achyutappa, who continued to rule until 1614. Achyutappa waged wars on behalf of his overlord and contemporary, Venkatapatideva, to whom he remained constant.

The Madurai Nayakas hark back to Vishvanatha (1529–64), who began his career as an officer under Krishnaraya. This governor reinforced the citadels at Madurai and Tiruchirapalli, and took pains to forge alliances with local chiefs, especially those of Tirunelveli and Tenkasi, who became his subordinates. Krishnappa I (1564–72), Virappa (1572–95) and Vishvanatha II (1595–1601), who all succeeded in a direct line, maintained a policy of loyalty towards the Vijayanagara throne, in spite of occasional conflicts such as the war of 1582 between Virappa and Venkata, regent of Shrirangadeva Raya. A prominent personality in these decades was Ariyanatha Mudaliyar, principal general and advisor to the Madurai Nayakas. His bequests to the Madurai temple exceed those of his royal overlords (see Chapter 4). The Telugu warriors were not the only viceroys to rise to power under the Aravidus; several military groups in the Kannada region also achieved autonomy at this time. The most important were the Nayakas of Keladi. The first known member of this family, Chaudappa, hailed from Keladi, a small town in the wooded hills in the western part of the Kannada zone, and was active by 1506. He was succeeded by his son, Sadashiva (1513–63), who gained renown in the campaigns of Rama Raya. In recognition of the services rendered on these occasions, the Vijayanagara commander granted Sadashiva control of ports on the Kanara coast. Sadashiva's heir was Doddasankanna (1563–70), who was responsible for moving the capital from Keladi to nearby Ikkeri, an event marked by the construction of an important temple in a novel regional style (see Chapter 3). Together with his brother, Chikkasankanna, with whom he ruled jointly for some years, Doddasankanna remained loyal to the Rayas after 1565. The following Nayakas, Ramaraja (1570–82) and Venkatappa (1582–1629), also professed allegiance to the Vijayanagara throne.

The Wodeyars of Mysore began their careers as provincial governors in the southernmost part of the Kannada region. The first prominent Wodeyar, Hiriya Bettada Chamaraja, also known as Timmaraja (1513–53), was responsible for laying out the fort beneath Chamundeshvari hill in 1524, naming it Mahisuru (Mysore). His son, Timmaraja II (1553–72), was a subordinate of Tirumala. Bola Chamaraja IV (1572–6) and Bettada (Devaraja) (1576–8), both grandsons of Chamaraja, had relatively short reigns. The next Wodeyar, Raja (1578–1617), sought mastery of the adjacent territories belonging to the Aravidus of Penukonda.

The Gowda chiefs of Yelahanka, an insignificant town in the country immediately north-east of the Wodeyar kingdom, also served as provincial governors under Vijayanagara. Hiriya Kempe I (1513–69), who was much favoured by Krishnaraya and Achyutaraya, erected a fort at Bangalore in 1537, making it his headquarters. All of the later Gowdas ruled from this city, which steadily grew in prosperity and influence. In 1550, Hiriya Kempe occupied the sacred hill of Shivaganga, thereby gaining charge of the lands around

Bangalore. Immadi Kempe (1569–88), the next important Gowda chief, was partly based in Magadi, another seat of Gowda power in the vicinity of Bangalore.

SUPREMACY OF THE SUCCESSOR STATES

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Venkatapatideva Raya, who had already been ruling for some years, was established at Chandragiri and, from 1607, also at Vellore. Reports by Jesuit friars describe the court at Chandragiri and the daily routine of the emperor. Only two palaces within the fortified citadel survive to give an idea of the splendours of this last Vijayanagara capital (see Chapter 5). The Rayas continued to experience troubles with the Nayakas: a rebellion by Chinna Bomma of Vellore was quelled in 1603, but in 1610 Srirangapattana was taken by the Wodeyars.

One feature of Venkatapatideva's era was that the wars with the Deccan Sultans diminished. This was largely due to the expansion of the Mughal empire into the Deccan, threatening the security of the Adil Shahi and Qutb Shahi kingdoms. Bijapur sought the support of the Rayas in a desperate attempt to counter the Mughal threat. Another characteristic of the period was the increased contact with the Portuguese and Dutch, and later with the British, who arrived on the Coromandel coast. Venkatapatideva granted concessions to European traders who built factories at various ports, such as Machilipatnam (Masulipatan) and Pulicat. The succession dispute that followed the death of Venkatapatideva in 1614 developed into a major disagreement between the Rayas and the Nayakas that eventually assumed the dimensions of a civil war. More than the losses of 1565, it was this conflict that precipitated the demise of the Vijayanagara empire; thereafter, the Rayas were reduced to minor rulers of a diminished kingdom. The next two Aravidu rulers, Ramadeva Raya II (1614–30) and Venkatapatideva II (1630–42), were unable to prevent further encroachments on their territories. The Adil Shahis resumed their raids into the Vijayanagara lands, the most effective being led by Randaula Khan. In 1641, this warrior overwhelmed many of the forts of the former empire, including Vellore, Srirangapattana and Ikkeri; the Qutb Shahis followed soon after.

This final blow to the authority of the Aravidus occurred during the reign of Shrirangadeva Raya III (1642–64) when Chokkanatha Nayaka of Madurai encouraged the Bijapur and Golconda Sultans to invade the Vijayanagara kingdom. In 1659 their combined armies occupied Chandragiri and Vellore, compelling Shrirangadeva to seek refuge with the Ikkeri Nayakas. Thus ended the Aravidu dynasty and with it the history of Vijayanagara.

The rise in power of the Nayakas paralleled the decline of the Rayas. Three major figures dominated the course of events in the first part of the

seventeenth century: Krishnappa II of Gingee, Raghunatha of Thanjavur and Muttu Virappa I of Madurai. They were all involved in the civil war that lasted until 1617. Venkatapatideva had already experienced difficulties with Krishnappa in 1604. Three years later he curbed the Gingee forces and took over control of the Vellore fort. It is possible that he celebrated this occasion by erecting the magnificent hall with animal sculptures that stands inside the Vellore temple (see Chapter 4). Krishnappa survived the dislocation of the civil war, but was succeeded in about 1630 by a series of lesser figures. The line was interrupted by the Sultanate invasions, and in 1649 the fort fell to the Qutb Shahis, to be followed ten years later by the Adil Shahis. But Gingee did not remain long in Bijapur hands; in 1676 it was taken by Shivaji and absorbed into the growing Maratha empire.

The disruptive sequence of events at Gingee was virtually repeated in the adjacent kingdom of Thanjavur. Raghunatha (1614–34) was appointed ruler by his predecessor and father, Achyutappa, after he had already participated in government for several years. Raghunatha survived the battles that marked the civil war of 1614–17, and was able to secure his kingdom against the aggression of Chandragiri and Madurai. His reign was marked by continued contacts with the Portuguese and the arrival of Dutch, Danish and British traders on the Coromandel coast. Raghunatha's son, Vijayaraghava (1634–73), succeeded to the Thanjavur throne, and spent much of his long reign repulsing attacks by the Deccan Sultans. But he was not always successful in this endeavour; in 1659 he was obliged to abandon Thanjavur when the capital was occupied for a short time by the Adil Shahis. Vijayaraghava maintained good relations with the Portuguese who were constant visitors at his court. Difficulties with Madurai were renewed and Thanjavur was twice raided by Chokkanatha Nayaka, Vijayaraghava being killed in the war of 1673. This effectively signified the end of the Thanjavur line, for in 1676 the Marathas took the city, thereby initiating a new era in the history of this part of the Tamil zone.

Muttu Virappa I (1609–23) was the ruler of Madurai during the years of the civil war between the Nayakas and the Rayas, after which he transferred the capital to Tiruchirapalli, declaring his independence from the Aravidus. He was succeeded by his younger brother, Tirumala (1623–59), the outstanding personality of the era and perhaps the most powerful of all Nayaka rulers. Tirumala's first task was to restore Madurai as the principal Nayaka headquarters of the kingdom. He waged wars against the Wodeyars of Mysore, and in turn subjugated lesser chiefs, such as those of Ramanathapuram (Ramnad), often with Portuguese assistance. In 1635, Tirumala ordered the invasion of Venad and also waged battle with the Chandragiri emperor. He encouraged the Adil Shahi incursion which resulted in the losses of Gingee and Thanjavur to the Bijapur forces. Chokkanatha's reign (1659–82) began

with the successful resistance to the Adil Shahis and the punishment of Thanjavur and Ramanathapuram for not having supported the Madurai army. Chokkanatha moved his capital to Tiruchirapalli in 1665, and was planning another raid on Thanjavur when he was interrupted by the arrival of the Marathas in 1676.

The era of greatest influence for the Nayakas in the Kannada zone occurred at the same time as that of their counterparts in the Tamil region. The independence of the Ikkeri Nayakas was heralded by Venkatappa's decision in 1614 to cease acknowledging the Aravidu kings. Many victories are attributed to the long reign of this ruler, including those over the Bijapur forces. Venkatappa extended the Nayaka territories to the Arabian Sea provinces of Kanara and Malabar. During the reign of his son, Virabhadra (1629–45), in about 1639, the capital was shifted from Ikkeri to the fort of Bidnur (later renamed Nagara). This move was due to the invasion of Randaula Khan, as well as pressure from the neighbouring Wodeyars and even from the Portuguese. The next ruler, Shivappa (1645–60), developed Bidnur into an impregnable citadel and managed to recapture territories previously lost to the Portuguese. Under his expert leadership the Nayaka kingdom once again extended as far as Malabar, and threats from the Wodeyars ceased. The later Nayakas of Bidnur were of lesser consequence.

Raja Wodeyar, who was on the Mysore throne at the turn of the seventeenth century, was able to steadily expand his kingdom. The capture of Srirangapattana, an outpost of the Aravidus, was an obvious sign of independence; this island fort now became the Wodeyar capital. Raja Wodeyar was the outstanding ruler of his era; he revived the Mahanavami ceremony of Vijayanagara times, and sponsored repairs and services to temples within the fort. Chamaraja V (1617–37), the next in line, was successful in his campaigns, enlarging the kingdom and encroaching upon the Ikkeri territories to the north-west and the Bangalore kingdom to the north-east. He is reputed to have been a great patron of the arts and letters. His successor, Kanthirava Narasaraja I (1638–59), countered the attempts of the Adil Shahis to capture Srirangapattana. Further battles with Bijapur took place in 1662–3. The two succeeding Wodeyars were powerful figures, in particular Doddadevaraja (1659–73). Meanwhile, the aggression of the Deccan Sultans lessened, so too that of the Madurai Sultans; this situation encouraged Doddadevaraja to proclaim independence.

INCURSIONS FROM THE NORTH AND BREAK UP OF THE SUCCESSOR STATES

The seventy-five years or so encompassing the last quarter of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century were a period of

considerable instability, caused mainly by incursions from the north, first by the Marathas, then by the Adil Shahis and Qutb Shahis, and finally by the Mughals. This phase of Southern India's history was brought to an end with the invasions of much of the region by Haidar Ali in the second half of the century and the struggles with the French and British for control of the 'Carnatic'.

The expedition of Shivaji, founder of the Maratha state, into Southern India, accompanied by one of the commanding officers from Bijapur, was actively encouraged by Tirumala Nayaka of Madurai in a ploy to dislodge his rivals to the north. Gingee and Thanjavur were both taken by the Marathas who then settled permanently in the second of these capitals, ruling with little reference to other centres of Maratha power in the Deccan. Venkaji, also known as Ekoji (1676–85), continued the prevailing administration of the Nayakas, and was successful in warding off repeated assaults by the Wodeyars and Mughals. He absorbed many of the lands formerly held by the Madurai rulers, thereby bringing to an end more than two centuries of Nayaka domination in the Tamil zone. His successor, Shahji (1685–1711), was perhaps the most able and distinguished of the Maratha line at Thanjavur. In spite of the minor wars and monetary demands of the Mughals who, having overwhelmed Bijapur and Golconda in 1687, pressed southwards, this ruler managed to hold on to the Maratha territory by paying tribute. His successors, Sarabhoji I (1711–27) and Tukkoji (1727–35), were constantly engaged in wars and frantic diplomacy with the increasingly influential French and British. In spite of the turbulence of these years, the Maratha court attained some measure of sophistication judging from the finely worked metal artefacts and painted manuscripts surviving from this era (see Chapters 6 and 7). The years following Tukkoji's reign were marred by disputed successions and increasing anarchy.

The invasions of Southern India by the Bijapur and Golconda forces had already destroyed the last vestiges of the Vijayanagara empire by the end of the seventeenth century. After the Sultanate armies had absorbed large tracts of the Kannada and Telugu lands, they proceeded southwards, occupying the principal forts of the Tamil zone such as Gingee. They were followed soon after by the Mughal forces. Zulficar Ali Khan, Aurangzeb's principal general, reached Gingee in 1690 which he then besieged. Resistance by the Maratha troops of Thanjavur, however, was sustained, and in the end the Mughal army had to retire.

By this time, the governors who had ruled the Hyderabad province as representatives of the Mughal emperors had become virtually independent of Delhi. The Hyderabad province of the Mughal empire extended southwards to Arcot in the northern part of the Tamil zone. The Hyderabad administrators in Arcot enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy and it was not long before they were directly in command of what was, in effect, a separate kingdom. Daud

Khan (1703–10) and Saadat Ullah Khan I (1710–32), the Arcot rulers who first adopted the title of Nawab, asserted their powers and waged war with the last of the Nayakas, Vijayaranga Chokkanatha II (1706–32), and with his widow Minakshi who carried on the government until 1736. By about 1740, a large part of the Madurai kingdom was under the control of the Nawabs, who even attempted to establish a secondary capital at Tiruchirapalli.

The Madurai kingdom had already begun to disintegrate by the end of the seventeenth century. The south-east province was under the management of the Setupatis of Ramanathapuram, whose prestige and income derived from control of the isthmus leading to the pilgrimage shrine on Rameswaram Island. Almost all of the Ramanathapuram rulers contributed in some way to the glory of this great monument (see Chapter 4). Raghunatha Tevan II, known better as Kilavan (1673–1710), declared his independence from Madurai in 1702. This ruler played an active and prominent role in preventing the Arcot Nawabs from taking Tiruchirapalli. His successors, Muttu Vijaya Raghunatha Tevan (1710–28) and Kutta Tevan II (1728–34), were similarly engaged in conflicts with the Nawabs and Marathas. A vivid idea of the courtly life of these kings may be had from the murals that adorn the palace at Ramanathapuram (see Chapter 7). The later Setupatis were lesser figures with little real influence.

An almost identical chain of events led to the emergence of the kingdom of Pudukkottai in the region midway between Tiruchirapalli and Ramanathapuram. The rulers of Pudukkottai, the Tondaimans, were originally subordinates of Madurai. Raghunatha (1686–1730) was the first of the Tondaimans to declare his independence. Together with his son, Vijaya Raghunatha (1730–69), he too struggled with adjacent kingdoms.

In the Kannada zone, the Wodeyar and Gowda kingdoms continued to coexist uneasily. One of the most prominent rulers of the era was Chikkadeva Raja of Mysore (1673–1704); much of his reign was taken up with campaigns against the Marathas. In 1728, during the reign of Dodda Krishnaraja I, the Wodeyar army captured the commander of the Gowda forces; thereafter, the Bangalore kingdom was merged into that of Mysore. In 1761 the Mysore throne was usurped by Haidar Ali.

THE ARABIAN SEA COAST

The geographical and political isolation of Kerala has already been noted in Chapter 1. Throughout the centuries considered here, the Malayalam zone was divided among a number of petty chiefs who ruled relatively freely within the confines of their limited domains without any allegiance to a central authority. Three sets of kings emerged as particularly powerful figures: the Zamorins of Calicut (Kozhikode) in Malabar to the north, the Rajas of Cochin and, in the last years of the period covered here, the Rajas of Venad to the south.

The Vijayanagara emperors were always eager to control the rich rice-growing and pepper-producing land of Kanara. Bukka I was the first Raya to annex Kanara by appointing viceroys to rule over the provinces of Basrur, Barkur and Mangalore (Mangaluru). But the remainder of Kanara remained in the hands of a series of minor chiefs, many of whom were Jains, such as the Chautas of Mudabidri and the Bandagas of Puttur. Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, these and other similar chiefs governed with minimal reference to Vijayanagara. This explains the large numbers of relatively small temples erected throughout Kanara in this era. Lucrative prospects were forged with Arab traders; in fact, some ports on the Kanara coast, like Bhatkal, already had sizeable Muslim populations, testifying to longstanding international trade relationships. The situation continued under the Tuluvas in the first half of the sixteenth century, the only difference being the arrival of the Portuguese. In 1505, an envoy from the Vijayanagara court granted the Europeans permission to build factories; Rama Raya signed another treaty in 1547.

With the catastrophe of 1565, commercial contacts between Kanara and Vijayanagara came to an end. Local governors and chiefs asserted their independence by strengthening their ties with the Portuguese who by this time had become undisputed masters of the Arabian Sea trade. At the beginning of the seventeenth century the Bijapur rulers also expressed a desire to benefit from Kanara's profitable trade; in 1608 they attempted to curb the power of the Jain chiefs. But because of their proximity, the Ikkeri Nayakas in the end had greater influence on the region. Later rulers, such as Virabhadra and Shivappa, were constantly engaged in strengthening their position and many coastal forts, including the stronghold at Bekal in Malabar, belong to their reigns. The Portuguese erected a factory at Mangalore in 1670 under Nayaka protection. This working relationship with European traders was extended in the eighteenth century to the Dutch and British, who founded factories on the Kanara coast in 1719 and 1737, respectively. The capture of Bidnur by Haidar Ali of Mysore in 1768 marked the decline in Kanara's wealth and independence.

The other part of the Arabian Sea coast historically related to the greater history of Southern India is Venad. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Venad chiefs paid tribute to the Nayakas of Madurai who controlled the adjacent territories of the Tamil country. Among the most important rulers of Venad at this time was a family with branches at Quilon and Kalkulam, the latter in the vicinity of Kanyakumari. Invasions from Madurai meant that parts of Venad were occasionally brought into the sphere of the Nayaka kingdom; incursions of the Venad chiefs into Nayaka territories temporarily extended the influence of Kerala into the Tamil zone. The arrival of the Portuguese and Dutch did little to alter this situation, and troubles with the Nayakas and their

successors continued. With the accession of Martanda Varma (1729–58) to the throne, the Venad kingdom, from this time onwards known as Travancore, emerged as the dominant power in the region. Kalkulam was renamed Padmanabhapuram, and a new capital was laid out to the north, at Trivandrum (Tiruvananthapuram). Through a series of successful campaigns, Martanda Varma gained control of the lands from Kanyakumari to the borders of the Cochin kingdom. Under this king and his heir, Rama Varma (1758–98), the Dutch were expelled and the power of the local chiefs was broken; the Travancore Rajas emerged triumphant as the dominant rulers in Kerala.

CHAPTER 3

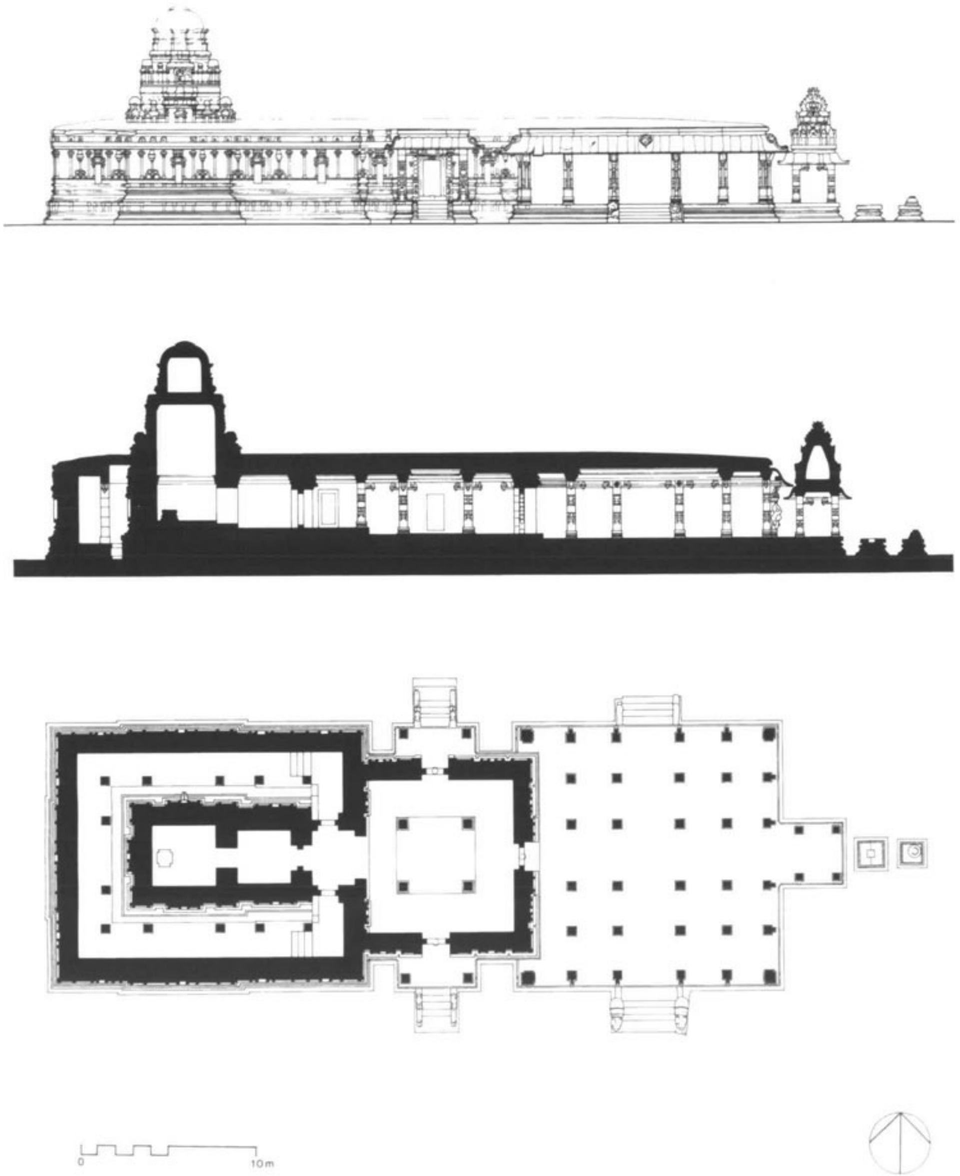
TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE: THE KANNADA AND TELUGU ZONES

The historical context of religious architecture in Southern India during the Vijayanagara and Nayaka periods is relatively well known, owing mainly to the records incised directly on to monuments or stone slabs set up for the purpose. Even so, the chronology of certain temples, including some with unusual forms and fine details, is still uncertain. Foundation inscriptions are lacking for quite a few major monuments, even when there is an abundance of information pertaining to later grants and bequests. While it is true that some sanctuaries date back to pre-Vijayanagara times, such as the Virupaksha shrine at Hampi and the Venkateshvara shrine at Tirumala, many religious buildings were, in fact, newly established during the centuries under consideration here. The patrons of such projects frequently advertised their pious bequests, but sometimes they appear to have been more interested in presenting themselves as protectors and repairers of already existing monuments than as sponsors of entirely new foundations, even when this was actually the case. This explains the many cases of unascribed temples belonging to the Vijayanagara and Nayaka periods. Notable exceptions are the Jain temples in Kanara, almost all of which are provided with precise historical data.

STYLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

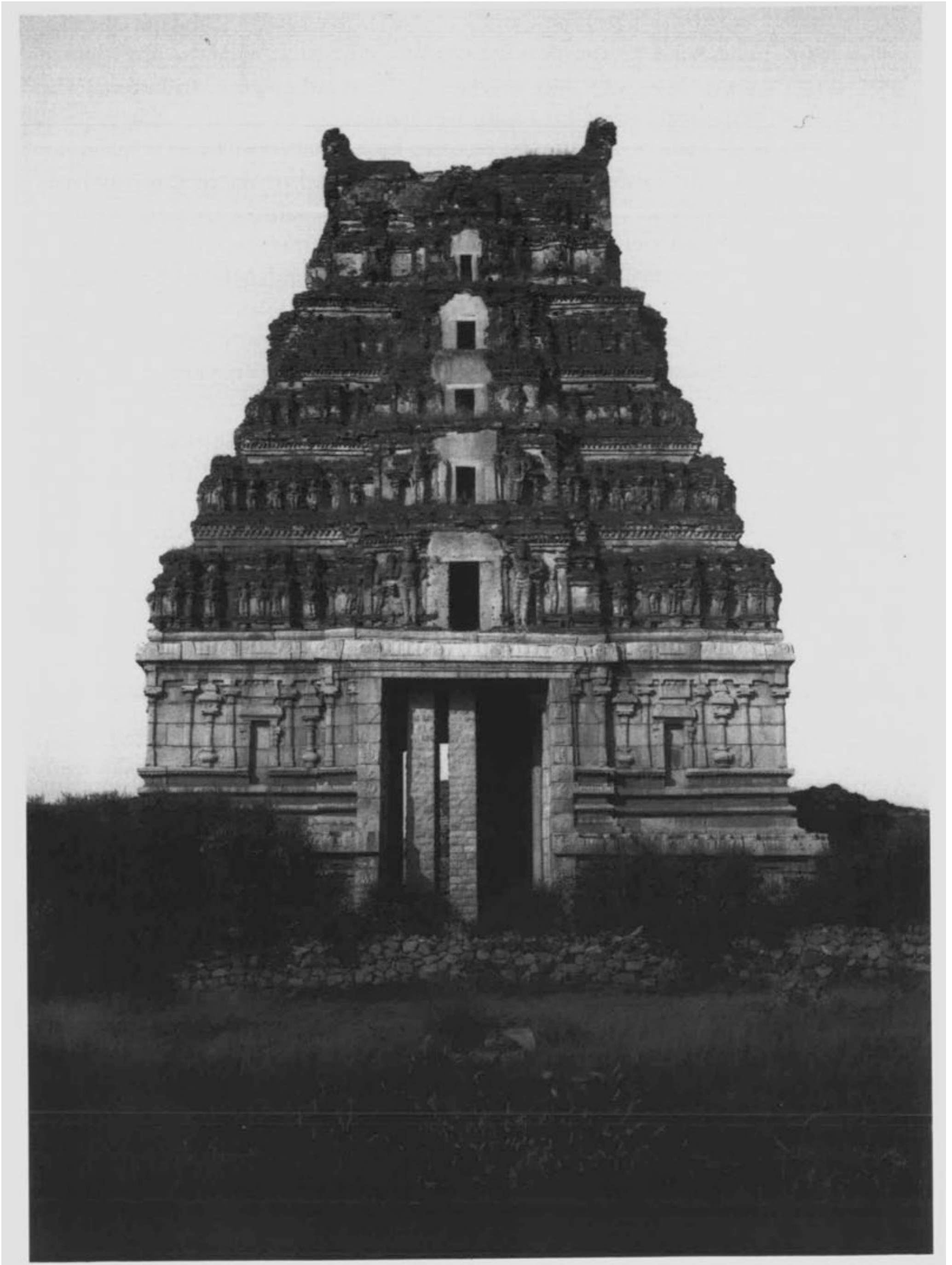
Temple building under the first Rayas in the second half of the fourteenth century, especially in the region of their new capital on the Tungabhadra, was largely dependent on previous practice. Temple architecture in the Deccan in earlier centuries consisted of several closely related styles. Twelfth- and thirteenth-century monuments of the Hoysalas and Kakatiyas, for instance, were constructed mostly in schist and incorporated one or more small square sanctuaries known as vimanas. Sanctuary exteriors were characterised by sharply defined basement mouldings and pilastered walls; pyramidal towers rose over the roof slabs. Vimanas in larger temples opened off spacious columned halls, known as mandapas. They were generally square or rectangular in plan, and partly open, with balcony seating on the peripheries.

The survival of this Deccan style under Vijayanagara was short-lived; in less than a century it was replaced by a quite different tradition derived from the Tamil country. Almost all temples erected in the Kannada and Telugu zones from the fifteenth century onwards display signs of Tamil influence. The architectural idiom is thoroughly standardised, the preferred medium being



2 Plan, section and elevation, Krishna temple, Vijayanagara, dated 1516

granite in all of its local variations. The Krishna temple at Vijayanagara, erected by Krishnaraya in 1516 to commemorate his victory over the Gajapatis, may be taken as a typical example (Fig. 2). In plan, the main unit of the complex consists of a sanctuary surrounded by a passageway, an enclosed



3 Gopura, Pattabhirama complex, Vijayanagara, sixteenth century

inner mandapa with side porches, and a second outer square mandapa open on three sides. The walls of the passageway and enclosed mandapa are divided into alternating projections and recesses by regularly spaced pilasters. The projections have deep niches for sculptures framed by secondary, shorter pairs of pilasters with shallow pediments; recesses have isolated pilasters standing in pots decorated with bands and tassels. The pyramidal tower of the vimana is constructed of brick and plaster, and was originally painted to blend in with the granite portions below; the capping roof is hemispherical. A similarly constructed parapet once rose upon the roofs of the mandapas and porches.

An idea of the entrance gopuras with which such temples were furnished at this time may be had from the Pattabhirama, a monument assigned to the period of Achyutaraya situated on the outskirts of the Vijayanagara capital (Fig. 3). The principal gateway of this complex is a solid, rectangular construction with a central passageway. Above rises an imposing pyramidal brick and plaster tower with ascending but diminishing storeys on an internal timber framework. The tower is capped with a large shala roof. This is characteristically barrel-vaulted, and indeed is partly hollow; the ends are marked by horseshoe-shaped arches.

All of these architectural features have their origins in the Tamil tradition, most notably in the temples of the Cholas and Pandyas. The revival of this idiom under the first Vijayanagara governors of the Tamil country, and its widespread dispersal throughout the empire, including the Telugu and Kannada zones where it was previously unknown, is the outstanding feature of architectural developments in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In conventionalised and expanded form, this Tamil-derived mode became, in effect, the official style of the empire, adopted for most religious constructions by the Rayas and their representatives.

But not all temple building activity under Vijayanagara conformed to this Tamil inspired manner; variations persisted in the wooded hills of the western part of the Kannada zone and in the adjacent Arabian Sea coastal strip of Kanara. Temples here were built in an idiom largely influenced by regional practice, partly inspired by earlier Hoysala traditions; there were only occasional references to the mainstream architecture of the remainder of Southern India.

TEMPLES OF THE EARLY SANGAMAS

Temples and gateways on the sloping shelf of Hemakuta hill immediately above Hampi, the nucleus of Vijayanagara's sacred centre, date from the first decades of the fourteenth century. They demonstrate the prevailing architectural style in the Kannada and Telugu zones immediately prior to the foundation of the capital. Two almost identical temples of the Hemakuta



4 Triple-shrined temple, Hemakuta hill, Hampi, fourteenth century

group each have triple vimanas opening off columned mandapas extended on one side as entrance porches (Fig. 4). The interiors are plain, the columns being provided with double capitals and angled brackets without any decoration. The exteriors are similarly unadorned, except for sharply cut basement mouldings and horizontal wall bands. Pyramidal stone towers above the vimanas are divided into horizontal layers by deeply cut mouldings. Part-circular projections extend from the fronts of the towers; roofs with characteristic square-to-dome forms, known as kutas, are crowned with pot-like finials. A third temple to the north-west of these two examples is laid out in similar fashion. Its outer walls, however, have shallow pilasters dividing the exterior into narrow bays. The towers rise in successive and diminishing storeys marked by parapets of miniature roof forms. All of these triple-sanctuaried monuments appear to have been dedicated to Shiva; an inscription on one example records the installation of three lingas by Kampila, the early fourteenth-century chief who may have been associated with the first Sangamas.

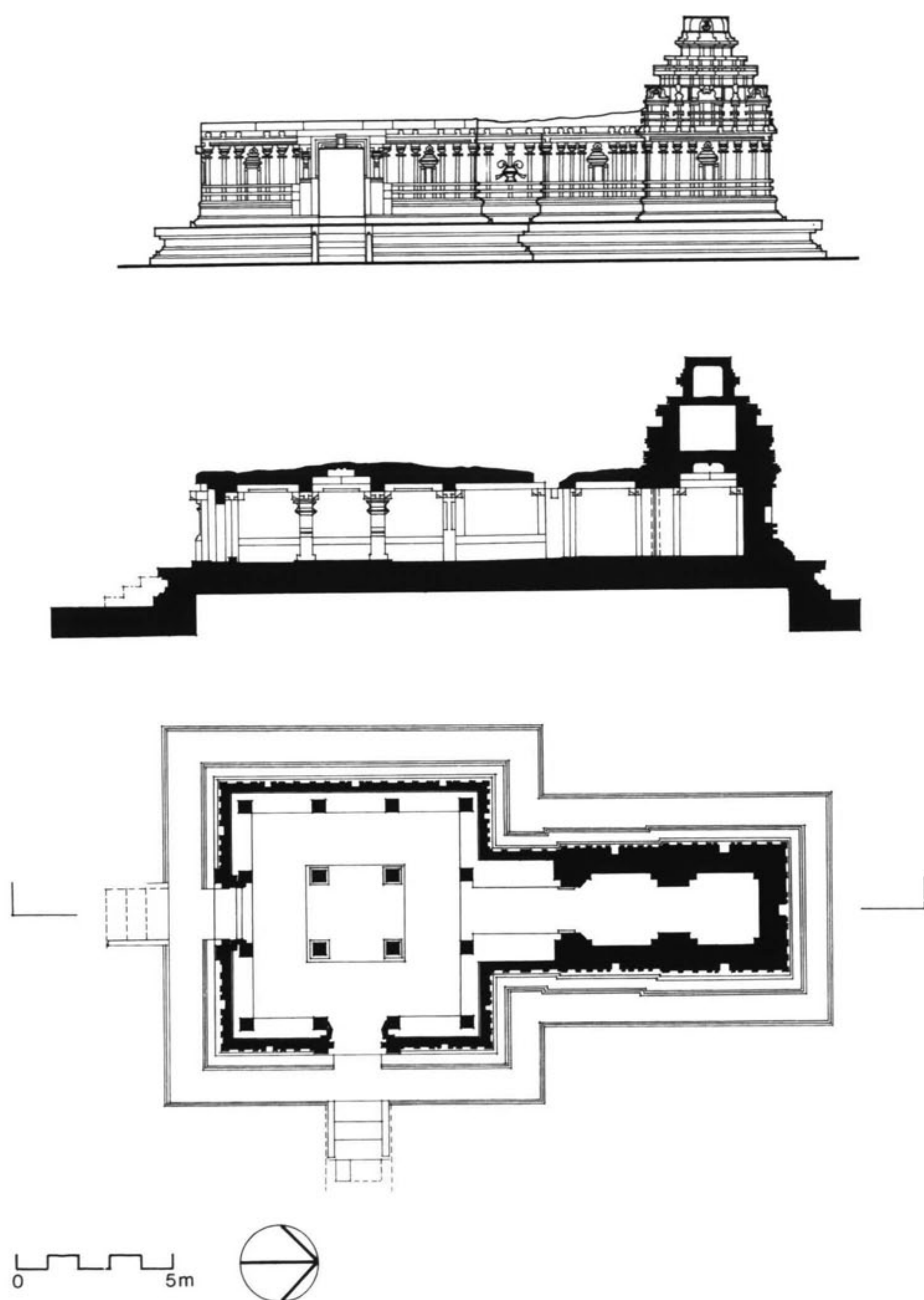
This simple style was retained for some time by the Sangamas: small shrines of this type are dotted all over the Vijayanagara site. One example in the royal centre of the capital, near to the recently excavated courtly structures, is consecrated to Virupaksha, the same deity as that worshipped in the main complex at Hampi. This temple is similar to the Hemakuta structures, but



5 Ganigitti Jain temple, Vijayanagara, dated 1386

there is only a single towered vimana. Its columned mandapa, originally a porch-like structure, is engulfed by later extensions. The shrine is assigned to the middle of the fourteenth century, when the royal centre of the capital was first laid out.

Another temple of this type, consecrated to Narasimha, surveys the Tungabhadra a short distance east of Hampi. A nearby inscription indicates that it was already in existence in 1379. The exterior of the building is plain, except for relief carvings of Garuda and Hanuman. Like the examples on Hemakuta, the vimana has a pyramidal tower with recessed horizontal mouldings. The building stands in a compound with an open two-storeyed gateway on one side. Another, almost contemporary structure is the Ganigitti Jain temple just inside one of the fortified entrances south-east of the royal centre (Fig. 5). It was erected in 1386 by Irugappa, minister of Harihara II, and is dedicated to Kunthu, one of the Tirthankaras. The building has two connected mandapas, each with an adjoining vimana; porches shelter doorways on two sides. The interior is massive and unadorned, except for columns with large double capitals and decorated doorways. The exterior is of little interest except for the stepped tower over the southern vimana. The stone



6 Plan, section and elevation, ruined temple, Vijayanagara, fourteenth century

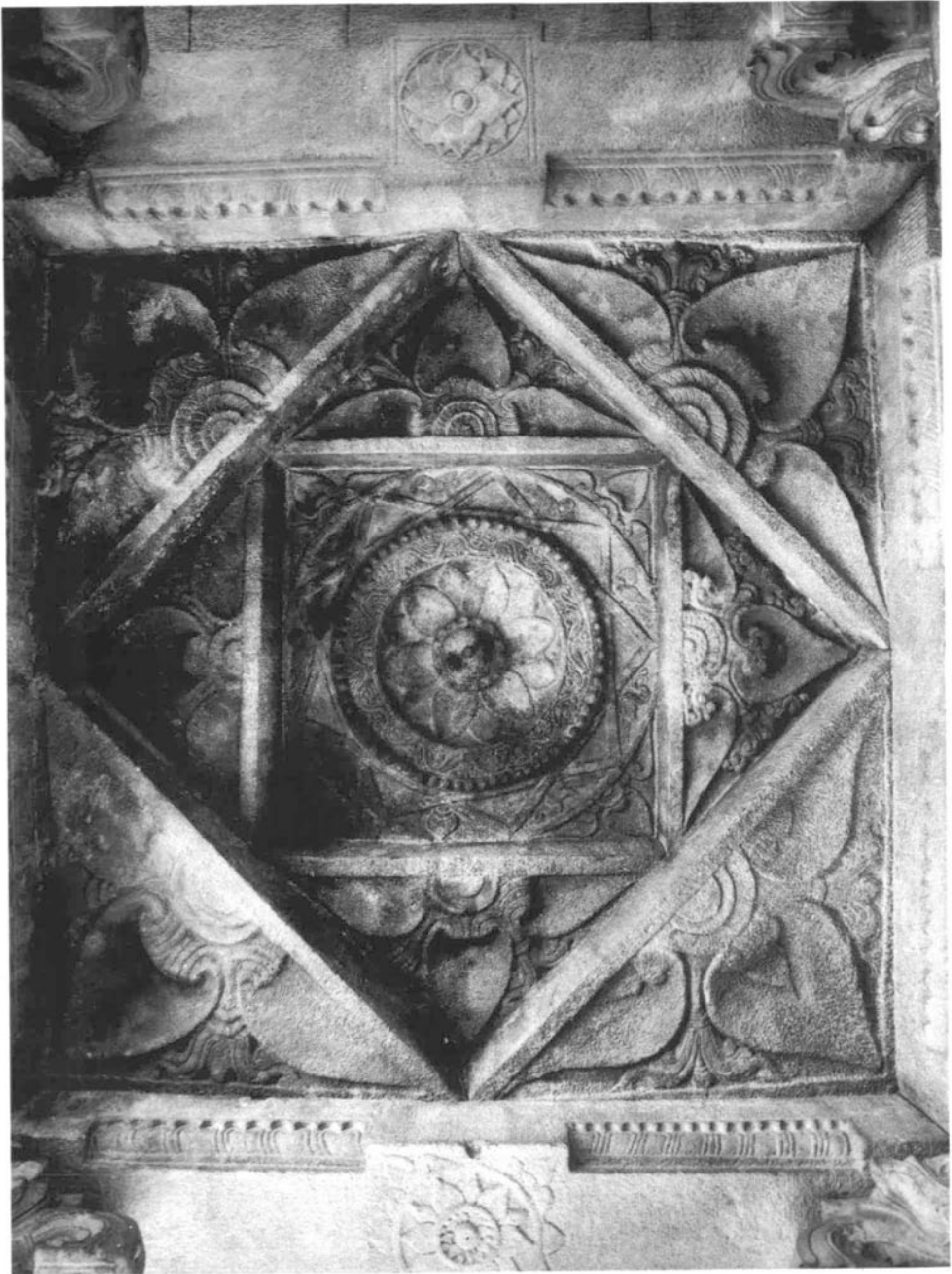
lamp-column that stands immediately in front has a dedication inscribed on the base of its shaft. Another temple erected by Irugappa, also dedicated to one of the Tirthankaras, is situated at Anegondi, the settlement on the northern bank of the Tungabhadra opposite the Vijayanagara site.

A further instance of fourteenth-century temple architecture at Vijayanagara is an abandoned structure on the north-east road leading from the royal centre to the river crossing to Anegondi (Fig. 6). It consists of a square enclosed mandapa with raised seating on four sides, entered through doorways on the east and south; twin antechambers lead to the vimana on the north. The outer walls, which are raised on a high plinth, have a basement with sharply cut mouldings, and regularly positioned pilasters defining projections and recesses. The tower over the vimana has two diminishing storeys capped with a kuta roof.

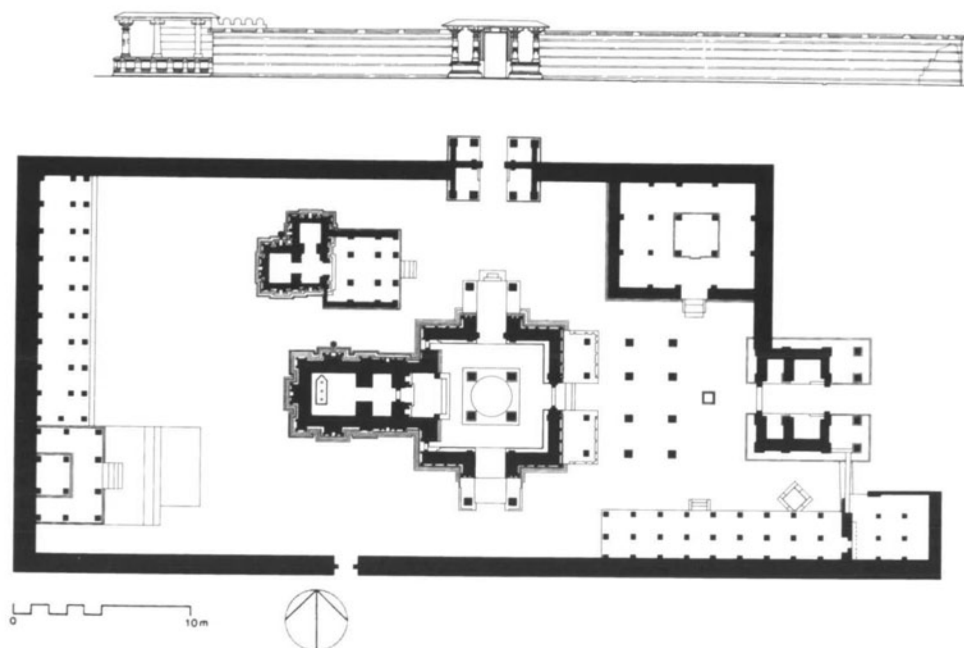
Beyond the capital, in the rapidly expanding territories of their kingdom, the first Sangamas built extensively, repairing damaged temples and adding new vimanas and mandapas. Examples of fourteenth-century temples stand inside the fort at Chitradurga, 125 kilometres south of the capital. Shrines at this site are simple structures built up into natural crevices which serve as sanctuaries. That dedicated to Sampige Siddheshvara is dated to 1356. Its mandapa has massive columns with prominent double capitals; bench seating is provided on four sides.

Other examples of temple architecture in the early Sangama era are located in the adjacent Telugu zone. The Madhavaraya temple at Gorantla, a small town 25 kilometres south-east of Penukonda, was erected in 1354 by a local chief of the Saluva family. It consists of a simple arrangement of a severely plain vimana and mandapa; this double unit is approached through a second open mandapa with seating on three sides. The central columns on the periphery have crouching lion-like yalis, a motif familiar in earlier Tamil architecture; columns elsewhere have cubic blocks with carved images (see Fig. 127). Ceiling panels in both mandapas are conceived as rotated squares with petal-like motifs in the corners (Fig. 7). An unfinished gateway of the gopura type stands to the east.

Another early Sangama temple in the Telugu zone is the Mallikarjuna shrine at Srisailam. This holy site is dramatically positioned above the Krishna at a point where the river flows through a deep gorge. The principal shrine is an unadorned structure with a pyramidal stone tower of simple design. The adjoining mandapa is a royal foundation of Harihara II, dating from his visit to Srisailam in 1405. Its outer walls are divided into bays by pairs of pilasters. Secondary shorter pilasters frame recesses capped with shallow pediments in the form of temple-like towers; some recesses have pierced stone windows. The porches that project outwards on three sides have massive columns with blocks on the shafts and double capitals above. (Much of the original fabric of



7 Ceiling, Madhavaraya temple, Gorantla, dated 1354



8 Plan and elevation of outer walls, Rama temple, royal centre, Vijayanagara, fifteenth century

this structure has been replaced.) An unusual feature is the sculptural treatment of the outer walls of the temple compound (see Fig. 124).

TEMPLES OF THE LATER SANGAMAS AND THE SALUVAS

Temple architecture in the fifteenth century in the Kannada and Telugu zones displays an increasing emphasis on features imported from the Tamil zone; especially pilastered walls with alternating projections and recesses, brick and plaster towers with hemispherical or kuta roofs, columns with carved images on cubical blocks, and free-standing entrance gopuras capped with shala roofs. In spite of the prevalence of these Tamil-inspired features, certain Deccan characteristics persist, such as open mandapas with projecting porches provided with balcony seating, and vault-like projections on the fronts of vimana towers.

One of the finest monuments of the period is the Rama temple at the heart of the royal centre at Vijayanagara (Fig. 8). (Popularly known as Hazara Rama, it is dedicated to the god Ramachandra.) This monument, which provides a focus for the many courtly and ceremonial structures that surround it, may have served as a private chapel for Devaraya I. It is contained within a rectangular compound, the peripheral walls of which are adorned with relief



9 Principal shrine, Rama temple



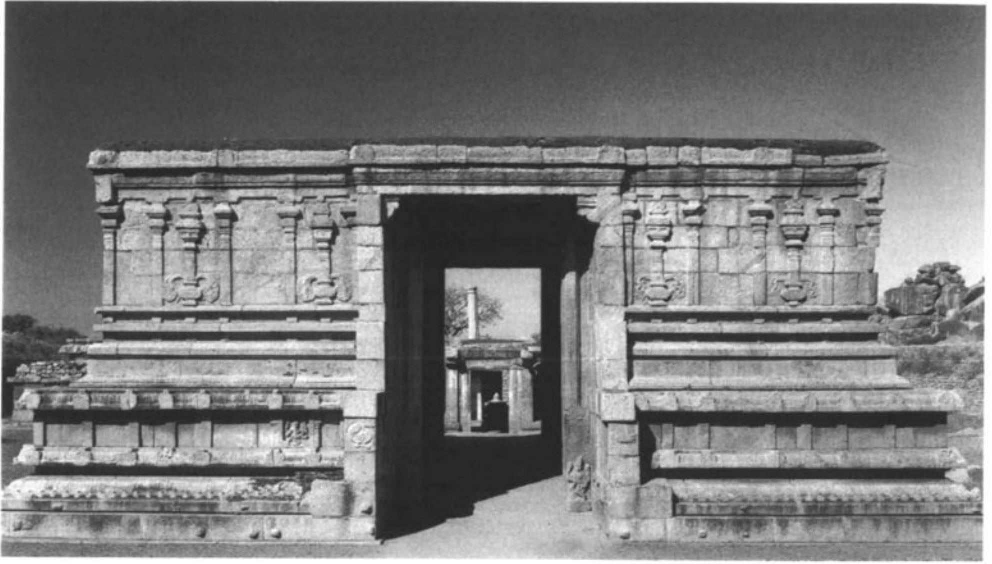
10 Basement detail, Rama temple

carvings (see Fig. 122). Entrances on the east and north have columned verandahs without any towers; columns with sculptured blocks and double capitals are sheltered by overhanging eaves. The principal shrine has a small square vimana with delicately articulated walls (Fig. 9). Pilasters capped with pediments of different designs frame deep niches; wall recesses have pilasters standing in jewelled pots. While no sculptures are preserved in the niches, the walls themselves are covered with narrative carvings (see Fig. 123). The brick and plaster tower over the sanctuary rises in a series of storeys capped with a kuta roof; a vaulted projection on the east is faced with a prominent arch. The adjoining square mandapa is approached through porches on three sides. Ornate basement mouldings decorated with lotus petals, jewelled ribs and miniature animals flank the doorways (Fig. 10). The polished granite columns of the interior have ornate sculptured blocks and curved lotus brackets. The secondary shrine to the north has two small rectangular sanctuaries, one of which is capped with a shala roof.

Further evidence of religious building activity at Vijayanagara in the fifteenth century exists in the sacred centre. The Virupaksha shrine at Hampi was continuously enlarged during the Sangama period. An important addition was the massive entrance gopura on the north side of the compound, from where a path leads down to the Tungabhadra. The outer walls of this gateway are elevated on a lofty basement with sharply defined mouldings; rows of flat pilasters are the only decoration on the walls. (The brick tower above is very much later.) Similar gopura-style entrances, though lacking brick superstructures, were built on Hemakuta hill above Hampi and in front of the Virupaksha shrine in the royal centre (Fig. 11).

An idea of the refined style of Sangama architecture in the Telugu zone may be had from the Rama temple at Penukonda (Fig. 12). It consists of a columned mandapa and antechamber leading to a vimana. The exterior presents a long low elevation divided by a rhythmic sequence of pilasters, including secondary sets with shala-type pediments and solitary examples standing in pots. The square tower of the vimana rises in ascending storeys covered with pilasters; it is capped with a hemispherical roof. (The twin Shiva temple nearby appears to be a sixteenth-century copy of this scheme.)

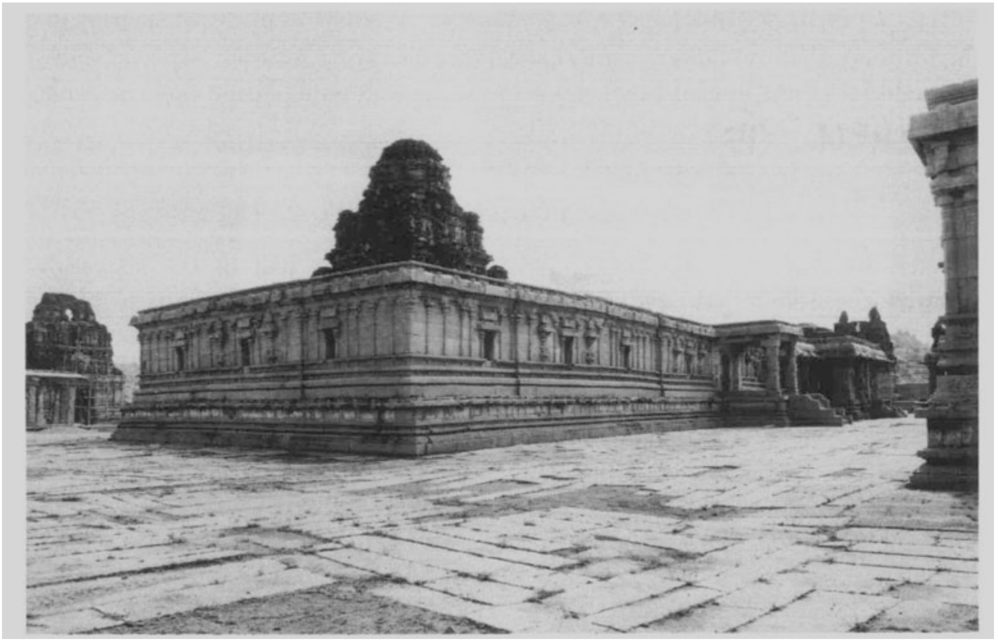
One of the most remarkable religious projects of this era stands at Virupakshi, an almost abandoned settlement in the extreme south-eastern corner of the Kannada zone. The temple was erected in 1431 by the son of Devaraya II who was at this time viceroy of the Mulbagal province. Consecrated to Virupaksha, the same deity as at Hampi, the Virupakshi monument is planned on a large scale, with three concentric compounds linked by entrance gateways. The peripheral walls of the intermediate enclosure measure 116 metres by 84 metres. The core vimana is totally plain. Of greater architectural interest are the gopura-style gateways on the east.



11 Unfinished gopura, Virupaksha temple, royal centre, Vijayanagara, fifteenth century



12 Rama temple, Penukonda, fifteenth century



13 Main shrine, Vitthala temple, Vijayanagara, fifteenth–sixteenth centuries

Another important temple of the Sangama period is the Narayana temple at Melkote, in the southern part of the Kannada zone. This monument was substantially enlarged by Timmana Dannayaka, chief minister of Mallikarjuna. The mandapa that he added in 1458 has columns with the finest decoration of the period, as is evident from the sculptured images and cutout miniature colonettes. Also assigned to Timmana is an unfinished gopura of massive proportions, 26 metres by 17 metres in plan, which stands freely on a hill a short distance to the south. Its outer walls are raised on a sharply moulded basement of lofty proportions. The interior passageway is flanked by sculptured columns and doorway jambs.

Temples erected by the Saluva Rayas and their representatives in the last two decades of the fifteenth century and in the first years of the sixteenth century continued earlier architectural traditions, but on an expanded scale. Though no monuments at Vijayanagara have been positively identified as Saluva, it is possible that the nucleus of the Vitthala complex in the sacred centre, some 3 kilometres east of Hampi, belongs to this era (Fig. 13). The vimana of this temple, consisting of a sanctuary and surrounding passageway, and the adjoining enclosed mandapa create a rectangle of about 34 metres by 23 metres. These expanded dimensions anticipate later developments in Tuluva times, as does the bold treatment of the double basement, the unadorned

pilastered walls and the brick tower over the sanctuary with its characteristic hemispherical roof. Other features recall the Sangama manner, especially the carved blocks and angled brackets of the sixteen columns inside the mandapa, and the bench seating against the walls.

TEMPLES OF THE TULUVAS AT THE CAPITAL

Under the Rayas of the Tuluva dynasty in the first half of the sixteenth century the number of newly erected temples and major extensions to older foundations dramatically increases, with substantial projects being undertaken at almost all of the important religious centres in Southern India. Such unprecedented architectural activity was only possible because of the sustained patronage by the Tuluvas and their representatives in the different provincial centres. Another factor which facilitated temple construction on this scale was the overall standardisation of building techniques and designs. While temples became larger and more complicated in terms of their overall planning, at the same time they became increasingly similar, with almost precisely the same vimanas, mandapas and gopuras. This unified idiom skilfully integrated the Tamil inspired elements that had first appeared in the religious architecture of the Sangamas and Saluvas.

Tuluva architecture is distinguished by the emphasis on open mandapas with elaborately treated columns. Prominent among the different types of mandapas that became popular at this time is the kalyana mandapa, or marriage hall. This has a small raised dais in the middle or at one end for displaying richly dressed images of gods and goddesses on the occasion of their ritual betrothal or marriage. A second type of mandapa, with a raised platform at one end, was intended for performances of religious music and dance dramas, also for sermons and recitals of sacred texts. Yet a third type of mandapa, generally a lofty construction with four slender columns, was used as a swing pavilion. Metal chains attached to a hook set into the ceiling carried a swing in which sacred images were placed. Another characteristic of Tuluva architecture is the evolution of the gopura as a dominant feature of the religious complex. From this period onwards, entrance gateways surpassed vimanas in height and elaboration, as is evident from the finely sculptured details of granite basements, walls and door jambs, and the fully modelled plaster sculptures of pyramidal towers.

Such developments are well illustrated at Vijayanagara where a series of grandiose monuments incorporated the latest technical and artistic innovations. Among the first projects undertaken by Krishnaraya was the enlargement of the Virupaksha complex at Hampi. In 1510 he added a long open mandapa, the aisles of which surround a spacious inner hall (Fig. 14). (Ceiling paintings of a much later date are preserved here; see Fig. 166.) The



14 Mandapa addition, Virupaksha temple, Hampi, dated 1510

outer piers of the mandapa have clusters of cutout colonettes, except for those in the middle of each side which are conceived as yalis. The same animal motifs occur on the piers that define the central hall; the piers at the corners have double yalis with diminutive riders (see Fig. 138). Two of the inner columns have their shafts entirely covered with miniature temple façades in shallow relief (Fig. 15). Krishnaraya was also responsible for the gopura aligned with the mandapa to the east. This modest structure has a pyramidal, double-storeyed tower capped with a shala roof. (The larger gopura in the outermost enclosure may also date from this period, but was almost entirely rebuilt in later times.)

Another addition to the Virupaksha complex that may be ascribed to the Tuluva era is the ceremonial avenue that approaches the temple from the east. It is lined with colonnades, some in double storeys to accommodate shops and stores. The colonnades are occasionally interrupted by structures with double-height columns that may have functioned as residences for courtly visitors during festival time. A mandapa with reused column dating back to pre-Vijayanagara times marks the terminus of the street, more than 750 metres away from the temple. The Krishna complex a short distance south of Hampi, another important project of Krishnaraya, has already been described (see Fig. 2); it, too, is reached by passing along a broad colonnaded street. The gopura that overlooks this street in the east



15 Internal piers, mandapa addition, Virupaksha temple

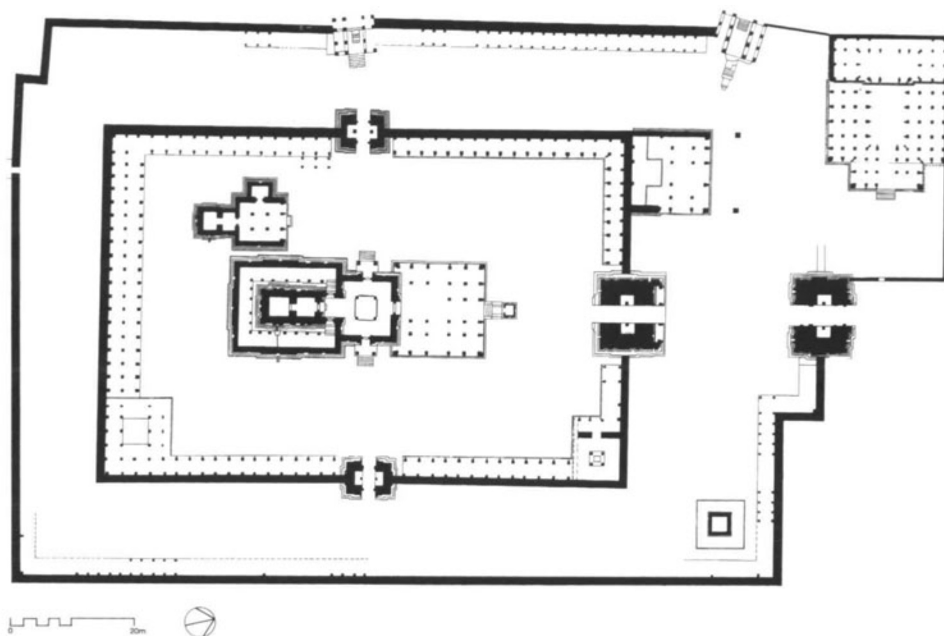


16 Vimana, Anantashayana temple, Hospet, dated 1524

compound wall of the temple is a monumental composition, with a lofty portico on its outer face.

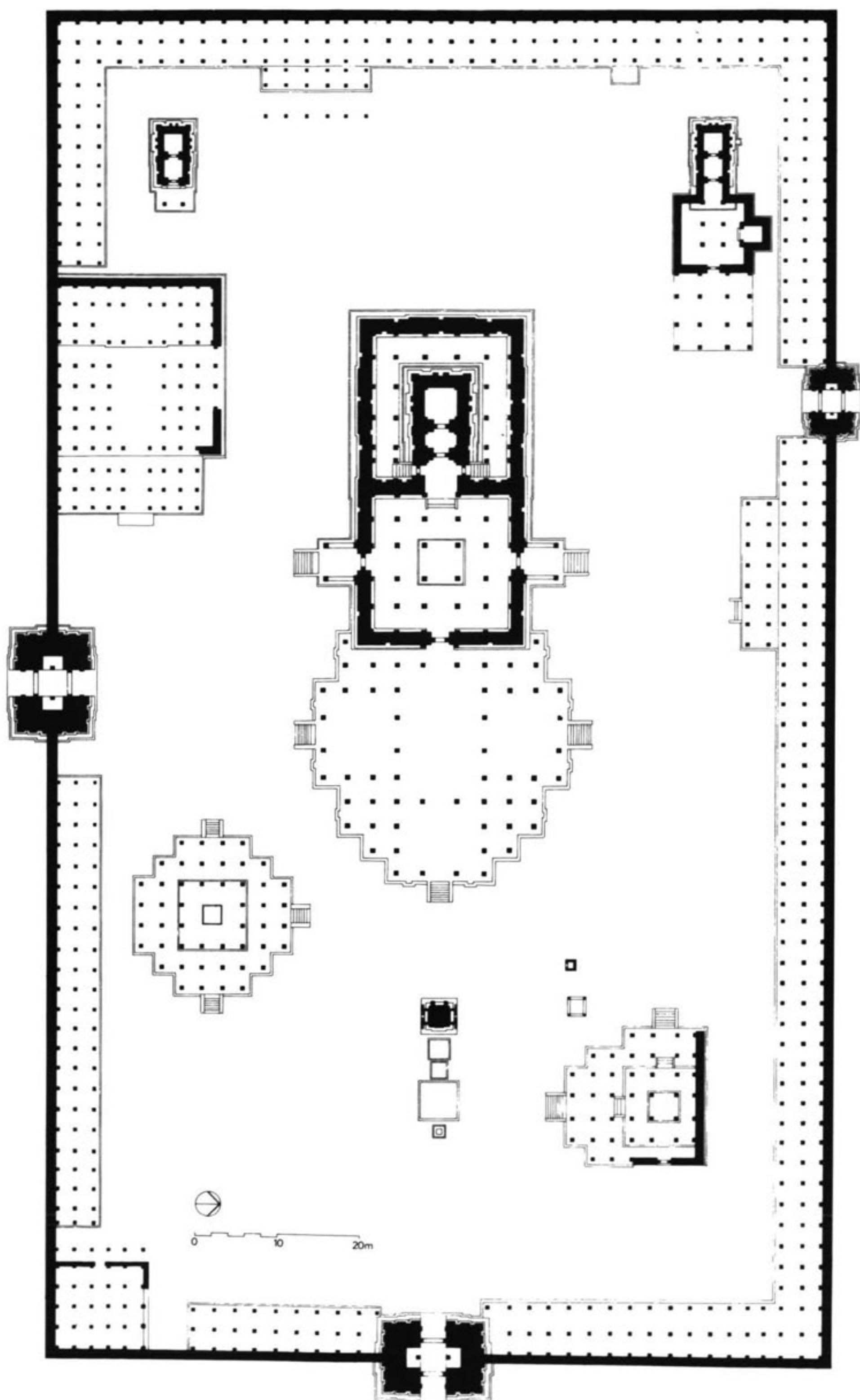
Religious architecture at Vijayanagara sometimes manifests inventive forms, as is demonstrated in the Anantashayana complex near Hospet, an outlying suburb of the capital some 12 kilometres south-west of the royal centre (Fig. 16). Dating from 1524, in the later years of Krishnaraya's reign, the temple has a large rectangular sanctuary with three doors through which the reclining image of Vishnu could be viewed from the adjoining antechamber. (Nothing remains of the original image, presumably in plaster-coated brickwork.) The sanctuary is roofed with a lofty brick and plaster vault, no less than 10 metres high, with semi-circular ends to achieve an almost elliptical plan; its outer walls are divided into storeys with regularly spaced arched niches. A spacious columned mandapa stands in front. The temple is reached after passing through a massive gopura intended as one of the largest of the period, but which was left unfinished.

Temple architecture during the reign of Achyutaraya shows an increasing concern for overall planning. The Tiruvengalanatha complex, a short distance east of Hampi, was erected in 1534 by Hiriya Tirumala, brother-in-law to the Raya. This monument resembles the Krishna temple in almost all respects, except for the two rectangular enclosures arranged in concentric formation (Figs. 17 and 18). The main shrine is entered from the north through a pair of



17 Plan, Tiruvengalanatha complex, Vijayanagara, dated 1534

18 Aerial view, Tiruvengalanatha complex



19 Plan, Vitthala complex, Vijayanagara, mostly sixteenth century



20 Mandapa, Vitthala temple, Vijayanagara, dated 1554

towered gopuras, the outer gateway being slightly larger and higher. An open columned hall of generous proportions stands freely within the outer enclosure. A long colonnaded street proceeds northwards from the temple towards the river. Another complex of the period that exhibits that same regularity of planning, though without a second outer enclosure, is that consecrated to Pattabhirama to the south-east of the royal centre. Its gopura has already been described (see Fig. 3).

The climax of architectural development at Vijayanagara is best represented by the Vitthala complex (Fig. 19). In spite of the fact that the main unit may date back to Saluva times, as was suggested earlier (see Fig. 13), inscriptions record additions to the temple by most of the Tuluva emperors. The glory of the monument is the outer open mandapa appended to the main shrine in 1554, during the era of Sadashiva (Fig. 20). Its magnificent conception is still evident, even though the ceiling is badly broken and the columns smashed. The floor of the mandapa is elevated on an ornate basement adorned with a frieze of horses and attendants, interrupted by miniature niches accommodating figures of gods; elephant and yali balustrades flank the access steps on three sides. The outer piers have groups of colonettes with slender fluted profiles clustered around the shafts, all cut out of single blocks. (Contrary to popular belief, the tones emitted by these colonettes when lightly struck do not form part of a musical scale.) The piers in the middle of each side are



21 Interior of mandapa, Vitthala temple



22 Chariot-like Garuda shrine, Vitthala complex

conceived as fully modelled yalis in vigorous rearing postures. They are overhung by graceful double-curved eaves ornamented with foliate medallions and upraised feather-like motifs at the corners; metal lamps were once suspended from stone chains at the corners. Only portions of the brick parapet survive.

The arrangement of the internal piers in the Vitthala mandapa creates open areas on three sides of a central large hall (Fig. 21). The piers at the sides and corners of the internal spaces present different combinations of clustered colonettes and sculptures of rearing animals and deities. The carving of these elements is virtuoso throughout. Equally skilful are the brackets with superimposed corbels supporting massive beams fashioned in inverted 'T' formation; they carry gigantic roof slabs, some more than 10 metres long. The ceilings have deeply recessed lotus designs.

The free-standing kalyana mandapa south-east of the main temple within the Vitthala complex is an elegantly designed structure. Its outer piers have pairs of rearing beasts in the middle of each side, and clusters of colonettes at the corners. The raised dais inside is overhung by elaborate brackets with an elaborate lotus in the middle of the ceiling. Perhaps the most original feature of the complex is the chariot-like shrine in front of the main temple (Fig. 22).

Intended to house an image of Garuda, this fanciful structure is provided with stone wheels imitating those of an actual chariot used in temple ceremonies. The walls above have projections with pilastered niches and cutout colonettes at the corners. (The brick and plaster tower with a hemispherical roof that appears in the nineteenth-century photographs is no longer preserved.)

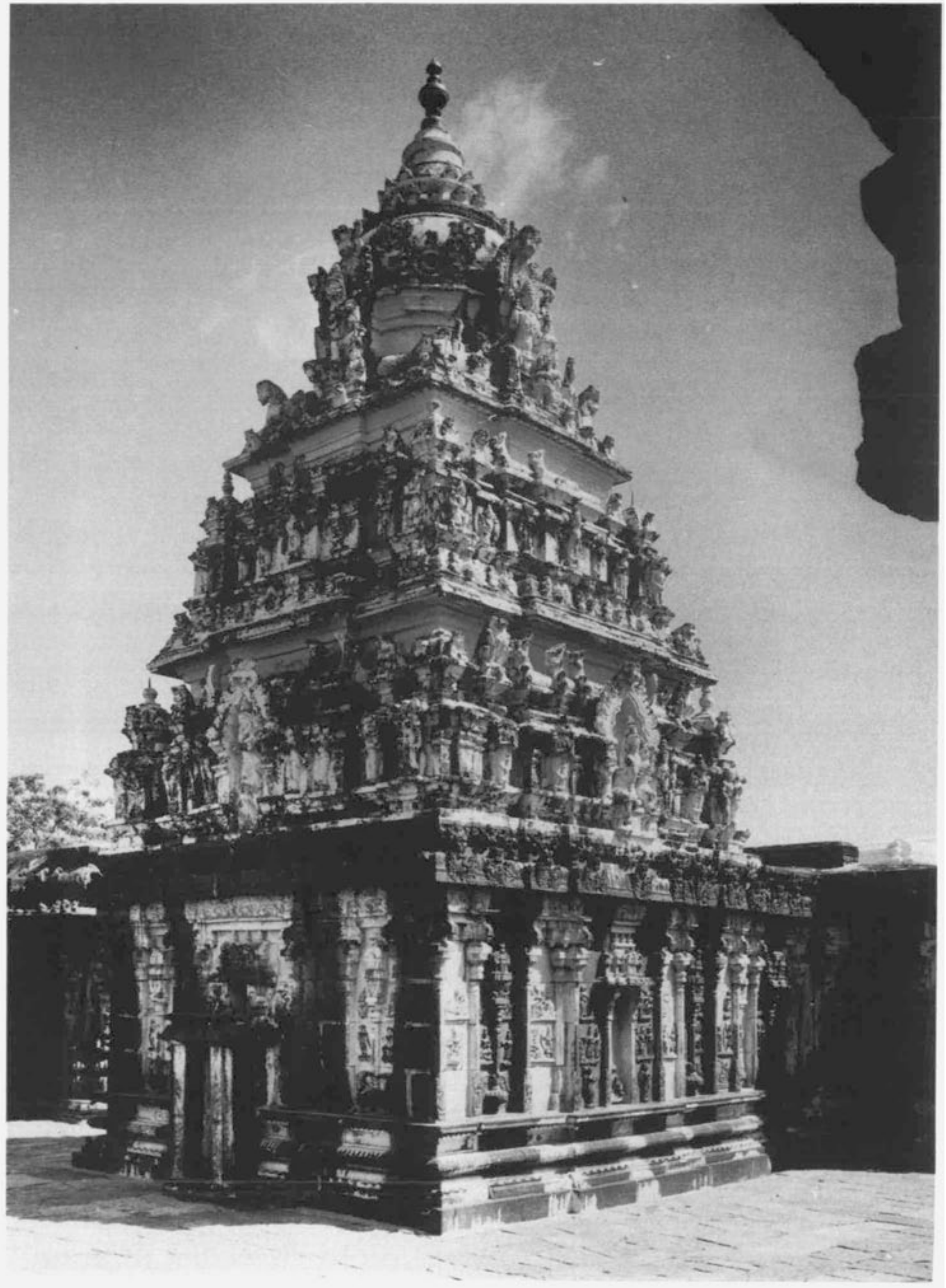
TEMPLES OF THE TULUVAS OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL

Religious projects of the Tuluva period beyond the capital are by no means inferior in scale or in quality. The towered gateway at Kalahasti, erected by Krishnaraya in 1516 on his visit to this pilgrimage site in the extreme south-east of the Telugu zone, gives the best possible idea of the gopura conception in this era (Fig. 23). The lower granite structure has a high double basement with well-articulated mouldings; the walls above present a sequence of shallow pilastered niches alternating with single pilasters standing in pots. The brick tower that rises above has seven diminishing storeys, each with a sequence of pilastered niches capped by miniature roof forms; central projections in the middle of the long sides have windows flanked by guardian figures. The tower is roofed with an enlarged shala of the usual type. Pot-like finials are aligned along the crest, while fierce monster masks created in plaster adorn the arched ends. (Most of the original plasterwork has now been replaced.)

Many religious projects of the Tuluva period were initiated by provincial governors and commanders, especially in the Telugu zone. Chinna Timmanayudu, a subordinate of Krishnaraya, erected the Chintala Venkataramana temple at Tadpatri, a town on the Pennar River. The walls of the vimana and enclosed mandapa of this monument are covered with carvings of epic scenes placed between the pilasters (Fig. 24). The porches sheltering the doorways to the enclosed mandapa have piers sculptured with pairs of leaping beasts. An open mandapa with raised floor areas defining a long central hall extends to the east. Its external piers have single or triple pilasters clustering around the shafts; those in the middle of each side are carved with rearing animals or attendant maidens. Yalis with riders adorn the piers lining the central hall; the beasts are doubled at the corners. A small masonry chariot, complete with wheels, pilastered walls and a hemispherical roof, is located immediately outside the hall. As in the Vitthala temple at Vijayanagara, it too serves as a Garuda shrine. A goddess temple to the north is approached through a mandapa, the overhanging eaves of which are enlivened with carved monkeys in crouching and leaping postures. The ornate ceiling within is treated as a dome-like lotus. A miniature shrine wedged between the two temples is built



23 Detached gopura, Kalahastishvara complex, Kalahasti, dated 1516



24 Main shrine, Chintala Venkataramana temple, Tadpatri, *sixteenth century*



25 Unfinished gopura, Ramalingeshvara complex, Tadpatri, sixteenth century

on a polygonal plan that is almost circular; its outer walls are packed with finely worked detail.

A gopura of the standard type marks the east entrance to the Chintala Venkataramana complex. This gateway, however, is far exceeded in elaboration by the two unfinished examples in the Ramalingeshvara temple, situated a short distance away, on the bank of the Pennar (Fig. 25). Though the main shrine of this monument is an earlier foundation, probably going back to Saluva times, the entrance towers clearly belong to the Tuluva era. The grey-green granite portions of the gopuras present an intricate blend of lotus mouldings, pilastered walls, niches with cusped arches and pilasters standing in pots. They are all encrusted with sharply cut friezes of jewels, petals and scrollwork, as well as with fully modelled animals and birds; the resulting sculptural density is unparalleled in Vijayanagara art.

Another outstanding example of temple architecture under the Tuluvas is that dedicated to Virabhadra at Lepakshi. This complex was thoroughly renovated by Virupanna, governor of the Penukonda province under Achyutaraya. The temple is built on an uneven granite outcrop strewn with boulders. At its core is a group of small shrines that predate the Tuluva period, as is clear from their plain walls and modest brick towers. In their original context, the shrines probably stood freely in an open court defined by



26 Outer mandapa, Virabhadra temple, Lepakshi, sixteenth century

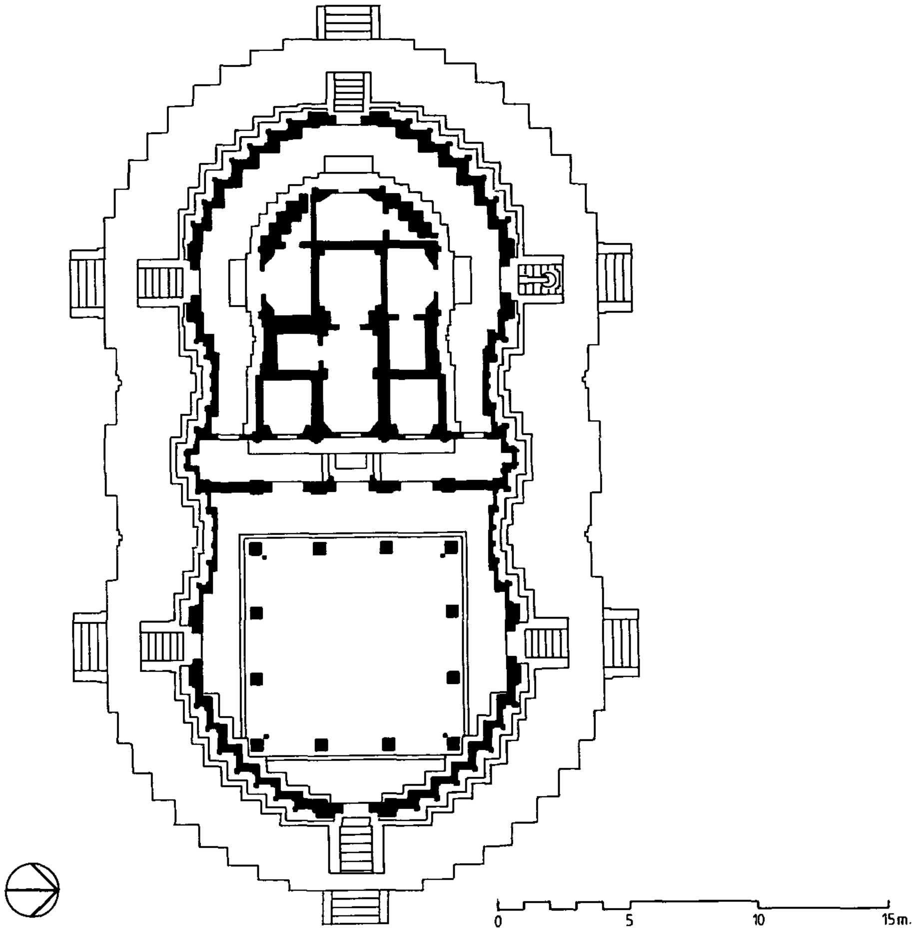
enclosure walls with narrative and animal friezes carved on to the outer surfaces. In the renovations of the sixteenth century this compound was covered over, the slabs roofing the central space being supported on squat piers with colonettes and yalis. An open mandapa of impressive proportions with finely worked piers was added to the north (Fig. 26). The open hall in the middle of this mandapa is framed by twelve piers, each with a large-scale figural composition (see Fig. 130); a dome-like lotus vault rises above. Vividly coloured paintings cover the ceilings above the side aisles (see Figs. 164 and 165). Access to the mandapa is through a pair of gateways positioned uncomfortably close together; they delimit the two approximately rectangular enclosures of the temple, one inside the other. A large but unfinished columned hall occupies the south-west corner of the inner enclosure.

A related monument of equal interest is the Chennakeshava temple at Somapalem, a remote village about 80 kilometres east of Lepakshi. Though no historical records are available, the monument appears to be contemporary with that at Lepakshi. Outside the temple stands an elegant lamp-column, some 18 metres high; its shaft is adorned with undulating stalks flanked by delicate scrollwork. A small mandapa projects outwards from the enclosure on the east side; its columns have multi-faceted shafts and donor figures. A gopura with an incomplete pyramidal brick tower leads directly to the open mandapa of the main temple. The outer piers have colonettes and are overhung



27 Kalyana mandapa, Chennakeshava temple, Somapalem, sixteenth century

by double-curved eaves with a brick and plaster parapet above. The unadorned walls of the adjoining enclosed mandapa and vimana contrast with the highly decorated kalyana mandapa in the south-west corner of the complex (Fig. 27). The four central columns of this small pavilion are raised on



28 Plan, Vidyashankara temple, Sringeri, sixteenth century

a low square dais and have cutout pilasters, attendant maidens, mythical beasts and lotus ornament, all in intricately worked grey-green granite. The basement of the dais is ornamented with friezes; so, too, the dome-like ceiling with miniature figures and central pendant lotus.

Temple architecture under the Tuluvas in the Kannada zone sometimes adopted variant forms, as is evident in the Vidyashankara temple at Sringeri (Figs. 28 and 29). Though the patron of the monument is unknown, it is likely that one of the chief pontiffs of the monastic establishment at this site was responsible. The unusual appearance of the monument is partly explained by the reliance on pre-Vijayanagara traditions. Hoysala inspiration is evident in the double, apsidal-ended plan created by multiple setbacks and the high plinth on which the temple is elevated. The outer walls contain a sanctuary,



29 Vidyashankara temple

several antechambers and a surrounding passageway, as well as a large columned mandapa. The high basement has superimposed friezes of animals and figures; balustrades with yalis flank the steps ascending to each of the six doorways. The walls consist entirely of sculptured panels placed at right angles to each other. The mandapa roof has flat slabs with log-like strips covering the joints. The tower over the sanctuary has a multi-faceted, almost circular plan; two storeys, each with tiers of cornices, are crowned with a hemispherical roof and a pot-like finial. (This superstructure anticipates the schemes of the later temples of the Keladi Nayakas in the same region; see below.) The internal piers of the hall are treated as rearing yalis with riders, doubled at the corners; they support heavy brackets and ceiling slabs with a dome-like lotus medallion. All of these features are typical of sixteenth-century architecture in the Kannada and Telugu zones.

TEMPLES OF THE ARAVIDUS

The decline of the later Vijayanagara Rayas is reflected in the diminishing role that they played in religious architecture after the middle of the sixteenth century. Many of the Aravidu emperors were established at the fort at

Chandragiri, in the southernmost part of the Telugu zone, from where they made grants to temples at nearby Tirumala and Tirupati. These emperors were also involved with building activities in the Tamil zone immediately to the south (see Chapter 4).

The Aravidus made numerous additions to the Venkateshvara complex at Tirumala, the celebrated pilgrimage shrine in the wooded hills above Chandragiri. The emperor Tirumala was responsible for the kalyana mandapa in the south-east corner of the outer enclosure of the monument. The hall has its piers fashioned in the mature Vijayanagara manner, with rearing beasts and riders. A raised dais at one end of the hall is treated as a miniature pavilion. Its granite piers have clusters of cutout colonettes clustering around a central shaft; the hemispherical roof is of brick and plaster.

Another important project of the Aravidus is the Govindaraja temple at nearby Tirupati. The magnificent gopura that stands freely to the east of the complex is aligned with the main temple. The gateway was erected in 1624, during the reign of Ramadeva Raya; it is, however, not a royal monument, its builder being Matla Kumar Anantaraya, a local chief who evidently commanded considerable resources. Portraits of this patron and his family are carved on to the passageway walls. The lower portions of the gopura are raised on a basement, no less than 10 metres high, with pairs of pilasters defining niches, and single pilasters standing in pots. The tower above is of the standard Vijayanagara type, with a steep pyramid of seven diminishing storeys. An indication of its evolved style is the discontinuity between the frontal projections and the pilastered walls on either side. Beyond the gopura are two swing pavilions with slender columns covered with finely incised scrollwork issuing from makaras. Among the Aravidu structures within the two compounds of the temple itself is the kalyana mandapa in the south-west corner of the inner enclosure; its central space is defined by piers sculptured with single and double yalis. A miniature pavilion similar to that already noted in the Tirumala monument stands freely in the middle.

JAIN TEMPLES OF KANARA

The architecture of the densely populated Kanara country displays a dependence on regional traditions, while at the same time preserving column types and doorway designs that go back to pre-Vijayanagara times. The most obvious features of these temples are the steeply angled roofs required for protection against the heavy monsoonal rains. Many of the Kanara temples are dedicated to the Tirthankaras, having been constructed by local Jain chiefs, especially in the inland towns of Kanara. These monuments, which are known as bastis, tend to follow a standard pattern. The most common scheme is a long building with a sequence of mandapas leading towards a shrine at one end



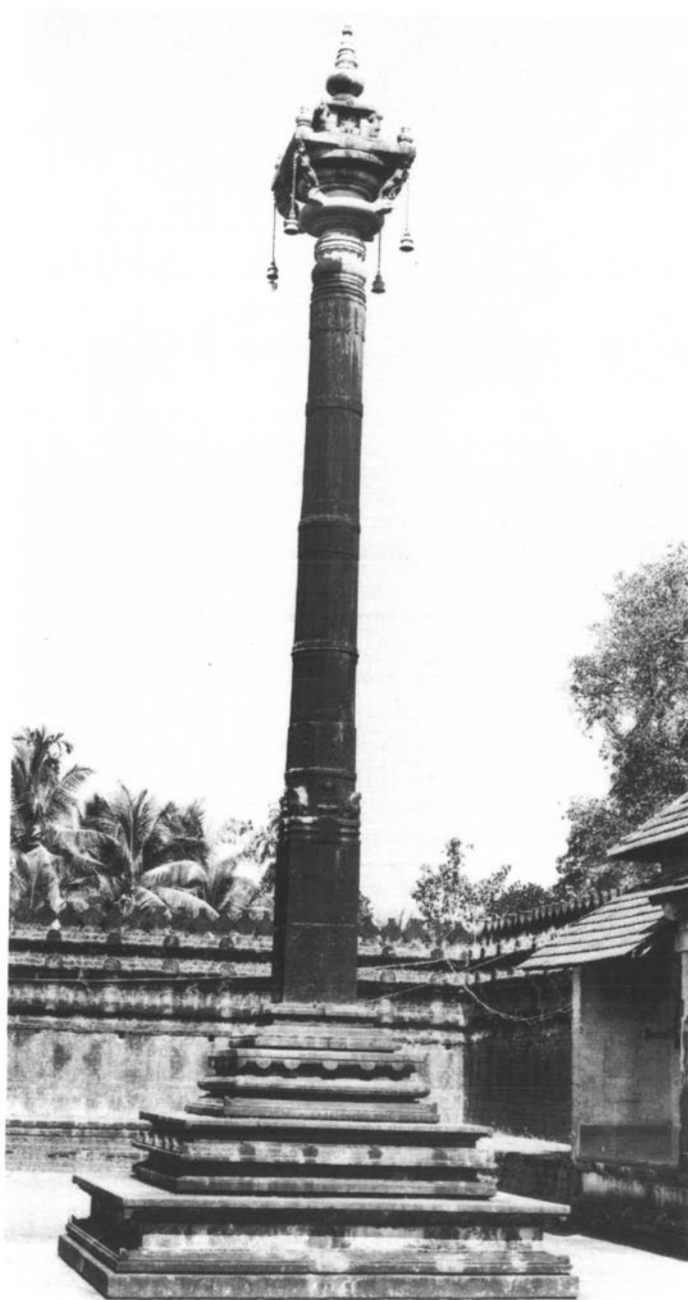
30 Mandapa extension, Chandranatha Basti, Mudabidri, dated 1452

surrounded by a narrow passageway. The outer walls are raised on a high plinth, but are plain except for basement mouldings and the occasional pierced stone window. Both mandapas and sanctuaries are roofed with sloping stone slabs laid in overlapping courses to imitate wooden shingles. The overhangs are supported on rows of stone columns that create colonnaded verandahs running around the buildings on all sides. Lamp-columns, or manastambhas, are set up in front of the bastis, standing freely in the middle of spacious courtyards. Entrance structures are sometimes substantial constructions with sloping stone roofs.

One of the earliest dated Jain foundations, and by far the largest and most elaborate of the Kanara series, is the Hosa Basti dedicated to Chandranatha at Mudabidri. It was founded in 1430 by a local Chauta chief, assisted by citizens of different professions who also made contributions according to the records inscribed on the walls. The temple consists of three enclosed square mandapas arranged in a row, two with four columns and one with twelve columns. They lead to the antechamber, sanctuary and surrounding passageway. The building is elevated on a high plinth and is surrounded by a colonnaded verandah sheltered by a sloping stone roof. An upper storey, probably a later addition, with a copper-tiled roof, rises in an ascending series of gables; they are supported on a timber structure with carved struts. The austere character of the stone portions of the building contrasts with the ornate treatment of the detached open mandapa immediately in front (Figs. 30 and 31). This was



31 Mandapa columns, Chandranatha Basti



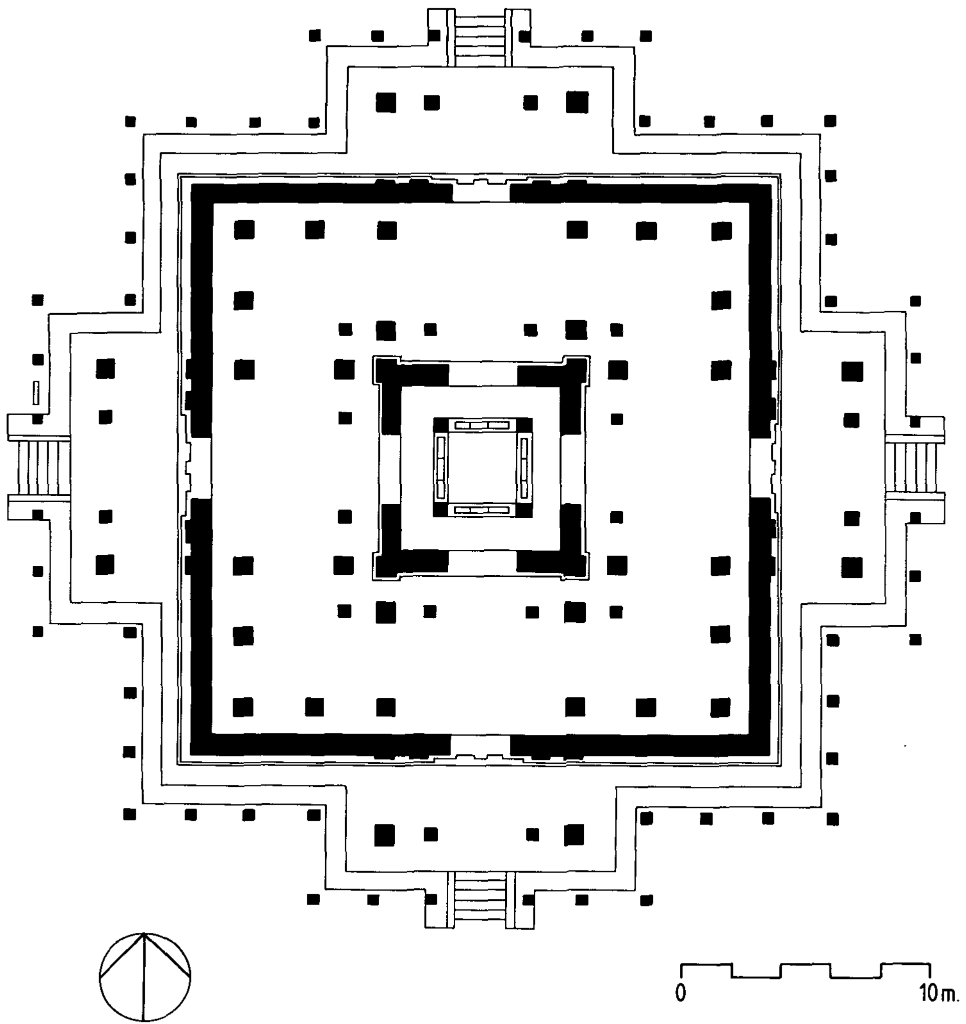
32 Manastambha, Chandranatha Basti, dated 1562

added in 1452 by Bhairavadevi, queen of the Jain chief of Gersoppa, a town in the northern part of Kanara. The columns of this hall have their shafts covered with knotted motifs, cutout pilasters and miniature figures; the capitals are doubled, the lower portions being circular and disc-like, the upper portions being square with lotus petals on the undersides. The ceiling panel over the central bay is treated as a radiating flower. The whole mandapa is actually elevated on a high plinth and surrounded by a colonnaded verandah. The manastambha in front dates from 1461; its sides have gently fluted and jewelled bands on the upper shaft (Fig. 32). A double capital and a quartet of yali struts carry a miniature shrine sheltering four standing Tirthankaras at the summit.

No less than twenty other Jain temples dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are preserved at Mudabidri. One of the largest is the west-facing Guru Basti, consecrated to Parshvanatha. The temple has a sequence of two columned mandapas contained within an outer rectangle of walls. The entrance structure has finely finished columns of massive proportions; they support a stone roof that slopes downwards on four sides. A manastambha is positioned outside. The desire to accommodate all of the Jain saints in a single temple dictated the plan of the nearby Derama Setti Basti. Its rectangular sanctuary has an elongated plinth to take images of the twenty-four Tirthankaras. Three doorways lead to a columned hall, originally open on three sides.

Variant layouts with centralised plans were sometimes also adopted for bastis, one of the most interesting being at nearby Karkala. This important Jain centre is dominated by the monolithic statue of Gommateshvara (Bahubali) that stands on the top of a granite hill just outside the town (see Fig. 120). Beneath the hill is the Chaturmukha Basti erected in 1586 by Bhairavendra, a local chief (Fig. 33). The temple has a strictly symmetrical plan. Four doorways surround the core sanctuary, through each of which three Tirthankaras may be viewed (see Fig. 117); in this way, a set of twelve is enshrined. The sanctuary is set within a hall provided with both massive and slender columns, projecting outwards in the middle of four sides. The colonnaded verandah which surrounds the hall and its projecting bays is roofed with tiers of sloping stone slabs carried on tall columns. But the roof over the inner portion of the building is flat, with log-like strips covering the joints. A similar design, though with additional projections on each side, is found in the Jain temple at Gersoppa.

One of the wealthiest ports on the Kanara coast was Bhatkal; the bastis preserved here attest to the wealth of the Jain community in the sixteenth century. The Chandranatha temple is entered on the east through a double-storeyed structure roofed with sloping stone slabs below, and flat slabs with log-like strips above (Fig. 34). A manastambha of the usual type stands



33 Plan, Chaturmukha Basti, Karkala, dated 1586

outside. The main temple, which has a succession of columned mandapas with triple sanctuaries at the end (intermediate walls missing), is roofed with two tiers of sloping stone slabs. The outer walls are raised on a high plinth surrounded by columns that support the roof overhang.

HINDU TEMPLES OF KANARA

Most of the trading towns of Kanara, especially those on or near the coast, have temples dedicated to Hindu deities. Many of these monuments lack



34 Entrance structure, Chandranatha temple, Bhatkal, sixteenth century

foundation inscriptions and have been much altered through constant use; even so, there is no shortage of examples dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a period when the region experienced its greatest prosperity. The simplest type of Hindu temple in Kanara consists of a small square shrine with a central sanctuary surrounded by a narrow passageway. This unit is roofed with sloping stone slabs in two tiers: the overhang of the lower roof is carried on stone columns that line the outer walls on four sides; the upper roof, often supported on yali struts at the corners, forms a pyramid capped with a brass pot finial. Walls rising on a continuous basement are relieved by shallow niches defined by pilasters, some with semi-circular frames; other pilasters flank 'false' doors in the middle of each side. A small, detached square pavilion invariably stands in front, its pyramidal stone roof supported on four columns with an additional twelve supports to take the overhang. Both shrine and pavilion are situated in the middle of a rectangular compound, generally with an entrance on the east, outside which is an altar and a flag-pole. Among the innumerable monuments in Kanara that conform to this type is the Janardana temple at Ambalpadi founded in 1571.

A variation of this basic scheme is discovered in the Narayana temple at Bhatkal, erected in 1540 by Ketapayya, a local chief. The temple consists of a small square sanctuary preceded by a columned hall, all contained in a



35 Ketapayya Narayana temple, Bhatkal, sixteenth century

rectangle of stone screen walls with horizontal slats that imitate those of timber (Fig. 35). The sloping roof rises steeply on four sides, the upper part being flat with log-like strips. Friezes of carvings cover the lower portions of the screens and the intermediate columns, as well as the beams inside; the central ceiling panel is surrounded by Dikpalas. The balustrades are fully sculptured with cutout yalis (Fig. 36). The temple stands in the middle of a small compound, with a lofty manastambha positioned beyond the entrance gateway on the west.

Some temples have double passageways around the central shrine, and a columned extension preceding the main doorway. This is well illustrated in the Anantapadmanabha complex at Karkala which dates from about 1567. Though much altered by later additions, the temple has a spacious interior, with an unusually wide doorway through which the reclining image of Vishnu may be viewed. Less permanent materials are sometimes preferred, possibly in response to architectural influence from nearby Kerala. Many temples in Kanara have copper-tiled roofs on wooden frames, reinforced with timber struts fashioned as figures and yalis; carved wooden ceilings and brass-clad screens are also found here.

Several sixteenth-century temples at Barkur have pairs of sanctuaries grouped together within single compounds. The Panchalingeshvara complex has a larger apsidal-ended shrine and a smaller rectangular shrine. Both have



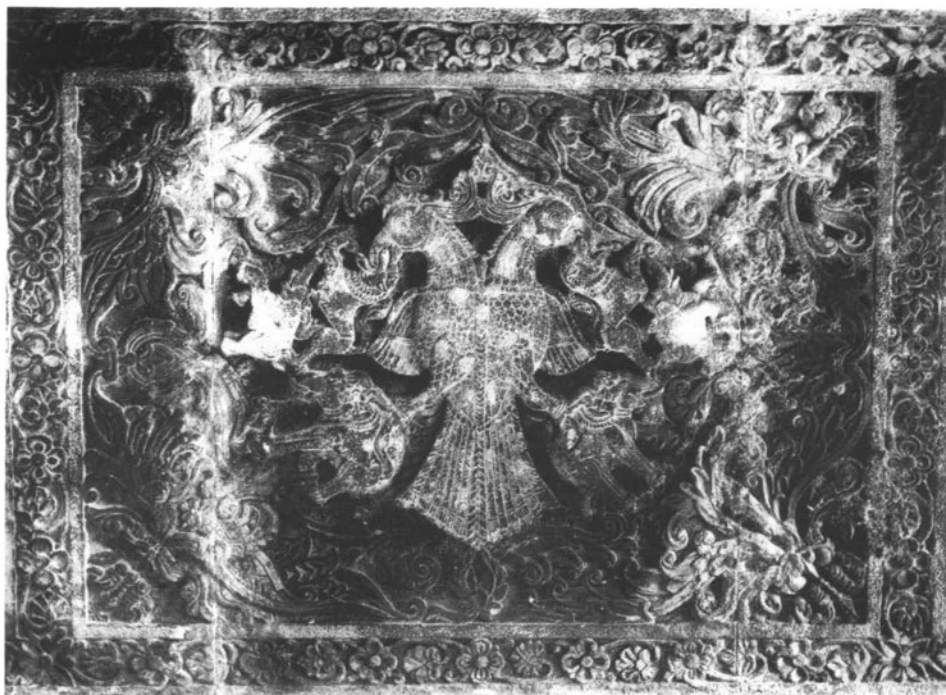
36 Balustrade, Ketapayya Narayana temple

masonry walls with basement mouldings and pilastered niches; shallow pediments display temple-like towers and arch-like frames with makaras. The roofs are sheathed with copper tiles and have elaborate timber gables. The detached gateway in the outer compound wall has finely carved columns and sloping tiled roofs. The nearby Ganapati temple has two rectangular shrines of almost equal size, each with its own detached pavilion. The eastern side of the compound is entirely occupied by a large entrance structure, its two passage-ways being aligned with the two shrines within. The roof, which slopes on four sides, is created entirely of stone slabs.

Apsidal-ended shrines similar to the Panchalingeshvara at Barkur are common throughout Kanara. Among the largest examples are the Ananteshvara at Udupi and the Panchalingeshvara at Vittal. The curving outer walls of these temples have pilastered niches with elaborate pediments, mostly obscured by later plastering; wooden screens conceal the lower storeys. The Vittal monument has triple tiers of sloping, copper-tiled roofs, with elaborate wooden gables on the fronts and pot-like brass finials on the ridges.

TEMPLES OF THE KELADI NAYAKAS

The architectural stye fostered by the Nayakas of the western Kannada zone in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries manifests many unusual qualities.



37 Ceiling panel, Virabhadra temple, Keladi, sixteenth century

As has already been observed for the Sringeri monument, Nayaka temples make repeated references to earlier Hoysala traditions in their open halls with balcony seating, sharply angled overhangs and pyramidal masonry towers capped with kuta roofs. The absorption of elements derived from Sultanate architecture in the adjacent Bijapur kingdom is another outstanding feature, as can be seen in the arched openings and niches with curved profiles, the parapets of merlons with corner finials and the decorative panels with geometric motifs and stylised floral designs.

The earliest Nayaka monument is the double temple dating from the second half of the sixteenth century at Keladi. The Rameshvara shrine is generally assigned to Chaudappa, first of the Nayakas, while the adjacent Virabhadra shrine, with which it is connected, was added by his successor, Sadashiva. Both shrines have small square sanctuaries surrounded by dark passageways, and roofed with modest towers with capping kuta roofs; exterior walls are mostly plain, except for shallow pilasters. A unique motif is the architect's measuring rod carved in shallow relief on the rear wall of the Virabhadra temple. Its length (78.5 centimetres) is scaled into halves, quarters and eighths. In front of the shrines are open columned mandapas with central halls. The peripheral columns are decorated with riders on horses; slabs set in between,



38 Aghoreshvara temple, Ikkeri, sixteenth century

serving as balcony seating, have friezes of temple-like façades. The ceiling inside the hall of the Virabhadra temple is adorned with geometric patterns, some of which appear to be derived from textiles, as well as looped and knotted designs, Surya with the Dikpalas, and the double-headed eagle, Gandabherunda, emblem of the Keladi dynasty (Fig. 37). A third shrine dedicated to Parvati stands within the same compound; its mandapa has finely carved wooden columns and ceilings. The entrance to the complex is a traditional structure, with timber supports and a sloping tiled roof.

The shift to Ikkeri during the reign of Doddasankanna provided the occasion for erecting the Aghoreshvara temple at the new capital (Fig. 38). This is the most impressive monument of the Nayaka series, and indeed one of the most original architectural conceptions of the period. Its north-facing sanctuary houses a large pedestal with numerous projecting facets that support a polished basalt linga. The outer walls of the passageway around the sanctuary are raised on a high plinth with sharply defined basement mouldings. The stone tower above rises in a succession of storeys that is capped with a part-spherical roof. The spacious mandapa which adjoins the passageway is entered by doorways on three sides, the access steps being flanked by yali balustrades. The hall has wall slabs that imitate balcony seating with friezes of temple-like towers; arched windows with pierced screens above are sheltered by sharply angled eaves. Sixteen impressive columns inside the



39 Nandi pavilion, Aghoreshvara temple

mandapa have their shafts and double capitals divided into multiple facets. Concave lotus petals alternating with deeply carved scrollwork are carved on to the central ceiling panel. An open pavilion stands immediately north of the temple (Fig. 39). The large sculpture of Nandi placed inside is glimpsed through arched openings that are separated by slender pilasters and overhung by angled eaves. A parapet of merlons with corner finials runs along the roof.

Later projects of the Nayakas are less ambitious in scale. An important foundation of this era is the Mukambika shrine at Kollur, located on one of the routes linking the Nayaka kingdom with the Kanara country. Founded in 1616 by Venkatappa, the Kollur monument consists of a small shrine above which rises a pyramidal tower with an arch-like, frontal projection surmounted by a gilded kuta roof. The shrine stands in a small compound surrounded by subsidiary chambers, complete with arched openings, angled overhangs and parapets of merlons. Another building of interest assigned to this period is located just beneath the summit of the fort at Kavaledurga, an elevated stronghold 25 kilometres south-east of Bidnur. The Kashivishveshvara temple here resembles the Kollur example, except for the arched doorway on the front, and the parapet of trefoil-shaped merlons and intermediate

finials. The rectangular compound is entered on the north through a large entrance structure, with two identical manastambhas at either side.

TEMPLES OF THE GOWDAS AND WODEYARS

In contrast to the inventive architectural schemes devised by the Keladi Nayakas, the religious projects of the Gowdas and Wodeyars are conventional, being built in a derivative style that imitates the mature Vijayanagara idiom, though at a lesser scale. The earliest Gowda temples date from the second half of the sixteenth century, during the reign of Hiriya Kempe I. This ruler was responsible for reinforcing the hill citadel at Shivaganga and founding the Gangadhareshvara shrine which is partly built up into a natural crevice. The columned portico that serves as the southern entrance to the temple has elaborately carved columns, with riders on animals adorning the piers and friezes of deities on the rear walls. Among the monuments of Hiriya Kempe preserved in Bangalore is a cave-temple similar to that at Shivaganga, also consecrated to Gangadhareshvara. The monument is of interest for the monolithic columns that stand in the outer court. Two of these support large vertical discs, almost 2 metres in diameter, identified with the sun and moon; others carry a trident and a seated bull. A nearby Nandi sculptured out of a massive boulder is also credited to this ruler.

The largest temple in Bangalore is that consecrated to Someshvara at Ulsoor. Though there is no foundation inscription, the monument probably dates from the early seventeenth century, during the period of Hiriya Kempe II. The core of the temple consists of a rectangle of walls containing the sanctuary, surrounding passageway and enclosed mandapa. The long low elevation is relieved by figures carved in between pairs of shallow pilasters. A spacious open mandapa with four projecting bays on the front adjoins this unit. Yalis of standard design adorn the outer piers and the principal aisle leading to the sanctuary. The gopura on the east is finely finished, again with sculptures between the wall pilasters; its pyramidal tower is reminiscent of early sixteenth-century models.

A similar, but artistically more interesting temple is the Someshvara at Kolar (Fig. 40). This resembles the Ulsoor monument in layout and detail, and is probably contemporary with it. There are, however, several differences. The open mandapa at Kolar has a central hall surrounded by a raised floor on which piers are raised; the frontal extension has four full-height piers carved with yalis and riders. A kalyana mandapa of fine workmanship is placed in the south-west corner of the compound. The small dais in the middle has four columns with cutout pilasters and sculptured figures.

Few examples of Wodeyar architecture survive from this period, probably because most projects of these rulers were thoroughly rebuilt at the beginning



40 Someshvara temple, Kolar, seventeenth century



41 Gateway, Chitradurga, seventeenth century

of the nineteenth century. An exception is the Venkataramana temple in the old fort of Bangalore, a late seventeenth-century monument erected by Chikkadeva on a site adjacent to the Wodeyar residence (later occupied by Tipu Sultan's palace). It is a modest structure with restrained decoration. The open mandapa that precedes the sanctuary has piers with clusters of colonettes alternating with those with yalis; the animals are unusually quadrupled on each of the four central columns. The sanctuary and antechamber have plain outer walls, except for a frieze of deities at the base. The pyramidal tower is capped with a hemispherical roof. Other temples of comparable design stand inside the fortified palace at Mysore.

One of the most important Wodeyar temples is the (Shri) Ranganatha complex, which gave its name to the island citadel of Srirangapattana in which it was built. The relatively large complex consists of two concentric rectangular enclosures, entered through an imposing gopura on the east. The rectangular sanctuary that accommodates a reclining image of Vishnu is approached through a succession of columned mandapas, one of which has an open court with a gilded lamp-column. The remainder of the complex dates from later times.

A number of lesser chiefs who rose to prominence at the same time as the Gowdas and Wodeyars were also active temple builders. The Nayakas of Chitradurga are of interest since they chose a strikingly archaic manner for

their constructions. Plain walls, squat columns and pyramidal stone towers capped with kuta roofs are the hallmarks of their style, as is evident in the shrines that they erected in Chitradurga town and the free-standing gateways that dot the fort above (Fig. 41).

CHAPTER 4

TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE: THE TAMIL ZONE

Religious foundations in the growing cities and popular pilgrimage sites of the Tamil country were repeatedly renovated and extended throughout the Vijayanagara and Nayaka periods. Temples were transformed into vast complexes, with multiple sanctuaries, subshrines, mandapas, corridors, courtyards, tanks and gopuras. These architectural components survive in a diversity of styles that encompass all of the centuries under investigation here. Disentangling the successive building phases is no easy task since there is rarely any simple coordination of chronology and overall layout. While it is true that religious monuments generally expanded outwards during this era, with the latest additions being located at the peripheries, much activity was directed towards replacing earlier structures at the core and filling in the open spaces in between.

The Rayas had a profound impact on temple building in the Tamil zone, but it is only with difficulty that their contribution can be estimated; this is because many Vijayanagara structures, especially those belonging to the Sangama period, are obscured by later and larger additions. Gopuras and free-standing mandapas commissioned by the Nayakas are easier to distinguish, being larger and more conspicuous. Building construction seems to have reached a peak of activity towards the middle of the seventeenth century when temples attained their greatest extent and elaboration. Nowhere is this better seen than in the Minakshi-Sundareshvara complex, the greatest project of the Madurai Nayakas (Fig. 42). This overall trend towards increase in scale was frequently accompanied by a concern for planometric geometry: the most important religious complexes were laid out in regular sequences of enclosures, generally in concentric formation, to encompass vast areas. The most perfectly realised of these schemes and certainly one of the greatest is the Ranganatha temple at Srirangam. The regulating geometry of this monument takes on a ritual dimension since all of the architectural components, especially the focal gopuras and the most important colonnades and mandapas, are arranged along axes dictated by the cardinal directions. Such alignments mark the routes followed by worshippers as they approach the innermost sanctuary.

STYLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

Temple building in the Tamil zone displays a stylistic consistency, evolving without major interruption over more than four hundred years. The



42 Aerial view, Minakshi-Sundareshvara complex, Madurai, seventeenth–eighteenth centuries

architecture of the Sangama period opens with a revival of Chola and Pandya plan types, basement mouldings, wall treatments and column forms. So truly do Sangama temples imitate earlier models that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish Vijayanagara constructions from these prototypes. The problem is intensified by the fact that fourteenth- and fifteenth-century projects are generally simpler and more modest in scale than those of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; only in the sixteenth century, under the Tuluvas and their successors, does religious architecture match and ultimately surpass earlier achievements. Temples dating from this time onwards are committed to grandeur of effect, the emphasis being on soaring gopuras and spacious mandapas.

Stylistic developments during the Vijayanagara and Nayaka periods are best appreciated in gopuras, mandapas and corridors. Gopuras erected in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries steadily grow in scale and elaboration. Granite walls are doubled and heightened, the pilasters becoming increasingly slender and delicate, often with part-circular, multi-faceted and fluted profiles. Double-curved eaves overhang passageways and openings in the upper storeys of the towers. Brick and plaster superstructures extend dramatically upwards, with seven, nine and eventually eleven superimposed storeys, as at Srivilliputtur (Fig. 43). Pyramidal profiles are gradually replaced with more gracious



43 East gopura, Vatapatrashayi complex, Srivilliputtur, seventeenth century

sweeping curves; diminishing storeys and shifting sequences of levels create perspective-like effects by which towers are made to appear taller. This illusionistic quality is a unique characteristic of gopura designs in this era.

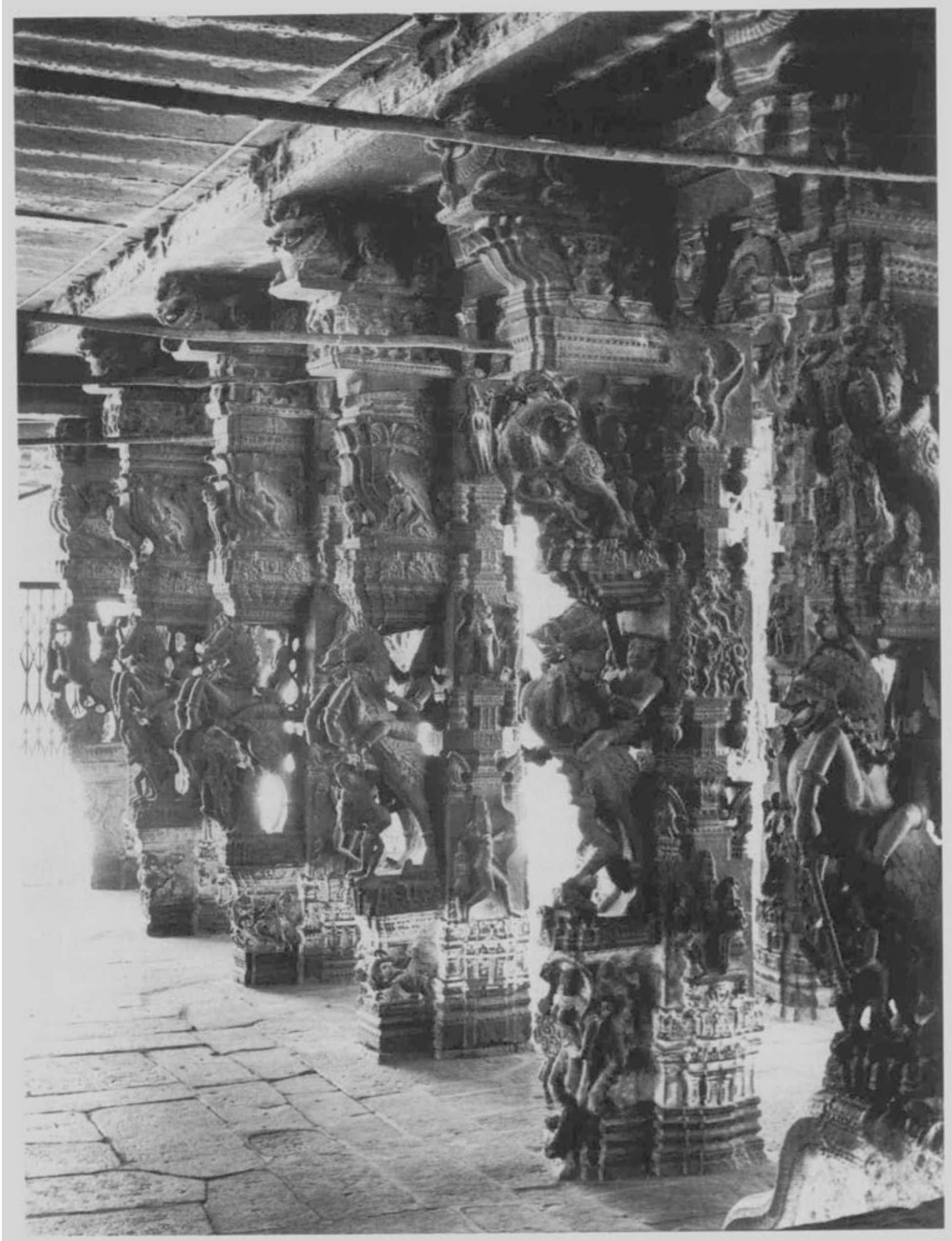
Mandapas progress from hundred-columned halls to, literally, thousand-columned halls. Multiple aisles define axial corridors and wrap around spaces intended to accommodate large numbers of worshippers. Raised platforms at the ends of aisles and corridors are for ceremonial displays of religious images. As has been observed for temples in the Kannada and Telugu zones, the popularity of marriage halls, or kalyana mandapas, is a typical feature of religious architecture in this era. These and other such mandapas served as settings for elaborate sculptural programmes, with exuberant figures and animals carved on to columns and piers. The kalyana mandapa in the outer enclosure of the Varadaraja temple at Kanchipuram may be taken as one of the finest examples of the era (Fig. 44, see also Fig. 47).

Long pillared corridors linking the different parts of the temple, creating architectural frames to unify earlier ensembles of structures are a significant architectural invention. Galleries in many temples surround sanctuaries and subshrines on four sides, serving as ambulatory passageways crowded with worshippers; they also create transverse axes within temple interiors, with spacious crossings that act as ritual focal points. Colonnades also define open spaces within the complex, surrounding open courts with tanks, flag-poles and altars.

TEMPLES OF THE SANGAMAS AND TULUVAS

There is no lack of historical evidence for structural activity under the Rayas and their representatives in the Tamil zone. Kumara Kampana, son of Bukka I, was the first Vijayanagara commander to conquer this region. An important part of his policy was the repair of temples that had been damaged by the armies of the Sultans. In 1371, for example, Gopana, one of Kampana's officers, had the image of Ranganatha reinstalled in the Srirangam shrine. This act, which signified the resumption of worship within the temple, was followed by a succession of additions by later officers. The pillared antechamber that precedes the main sanctuary is assigned to the last decade of the fourteenth century, when Virupana Udaiyar, son of Harihara II, was governor of the Tamil country. The same officer was responsible for coating its apsidal-ended roof in solid gold sheets. The fifteenth century witnessed an uninterrupted sequence of extensions at Srirangam, with the construction of new shrines, mandapas and gopuras.

All of these structural additions at Srirangam were in the revived Chola style, which under the Sangamas was given a new lease of life. The same is true of other projects elsewhere in the region during this period. A typical example



44 Sculptured piers, kalyana mandapa, Varadaraja complex, Kanchipuram, sixteenth century



45 Goddess shrine, Shiva temple, Viramanallur, fifteenth century

of this imitative mode is the goddess shrine of the Shiva temple at Viramanallur (Fig. 45). This site is situated some 25 kilometres north of Kanchipuram, in the transitional Telugu-Tamil zone. The building, which dates from the fifteenth century, is dependent on earlier practice, as is clear from the Chola style of the double capitals and angled corbels of the wall pilasters. The double-storeyed tower with its large hemispherical roof is similarly inspired by earlier prototypes. Only the curved eaves that shelter the walls of the adjacent mandapa and porch betray a Vijayanagara date.

Temple building under the Tuluvas was often directly commissioned by the Rayas themselves as they travelled around the Tamil zone. The architectural consequences of Krishnaraya's campaign of 1516, for instance, are clearly evident in the spacious mandapas and lofty gopuras that he commissioned at important religious sites. Among these are the additions to the Arunachaleshvara complex at Tiruvannamalai, in the heart of the Tamil zone. The thousand-columned hall that occupies much of the fourth enclosure is an immense structure with a row of thirty-four piers on its south-facing façade, each sculptured with a rearing horse and rider. The internal piers open up to create a broad central aisle flanked by animal motifs leading to a dais at its northern

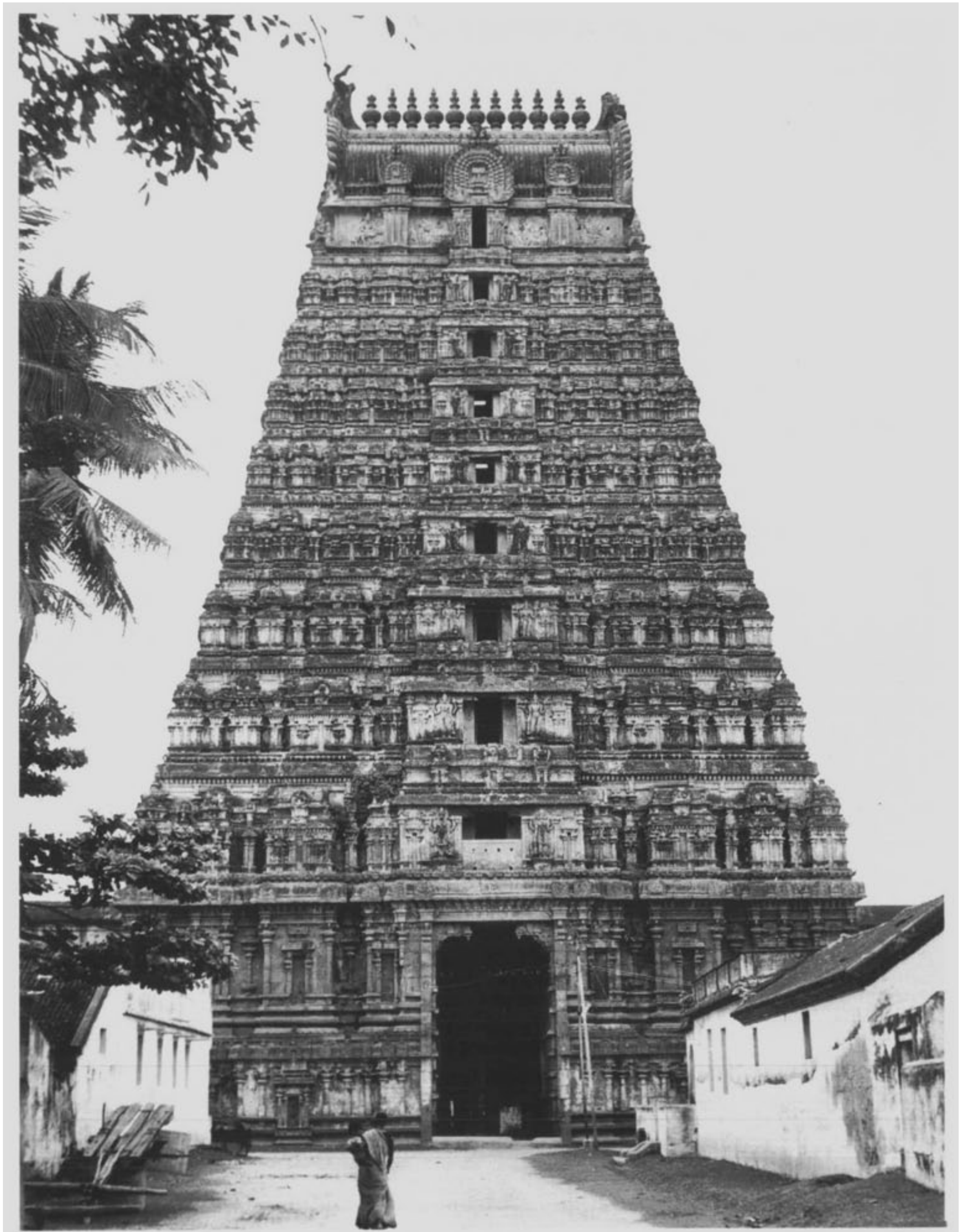
end. The large tank surrounded by colonnades to the south of this hall also dates from this time. Another construction of Krishnaraya at Tiruvannamalai is the kalyana mandapa in the south-west corner of the second enclosure. Its triple-bayed opening in the middle of the northern wall is framed by piers with attached colonettes. The walls at either side, which are raised on a basement with a frieze of animals and figures, have broadly spaced niches and a decorated cornice.

The gopura that Krishnaraya erected on the same campaign at Kalahasti in the Telugu zone has already been described (see Fig. 23). Another gateway which may be credited to this emperor on stylistic grounds is that which marks the inner entrance on the south side of the Ekambareshvara temple at Kanchipuram. (The deity enshrined here is also known as Ekamranatha.) The somewhat squat proportions of this gopura are characteristic of Krishnaraya's constructions; other typical features are the fully modelled architectural elements of the seven diminishing storeys and the pronounced projections in the middle of each side. (Though the outer and much higher gopura on the south side of this complex is generally attributed to Krishnaraya, it is clearly a Nayaka structure; the same is true of the great eastern gopura at Tiruvannamalai.)

Krishnaraya was also responsible for completing several earlier gopuras, as is demonstrated at Chidambaram, a pilgrimage town situated to the north of the Kaveri Delta, 12 kilometres inland from the Bay of Bengal. The northern gateway of the Nataraja complex, a Chola foundation, is capped with a Vijayanagara-styled tower. A sculptured figure inserted into a niche within the passageway portrays the emperor himself as donor (see Fig. 114). Later Rayas also made grants to Nataraja. Achyutaraya added an inscription of his own in 1530 to the same gopura, evidently still in the course of completion. In 1539 this same ruler ordered the construction of the Govindaraja shrine in the south-west corner of the inner compound; its rectangular sanctuary houses a reclining figure of Vishnu.

TEMPLES OF THE ARAVIDUS

Religious architecture in the Tamil zone continued to develop without interruption under the Aravidu Rayas. The outermost east gateway of the Varadaraja complex at Kanchipuram is typical of gopuras erected in the second half of the sixteenth century (Fig. 46). It is inscribed with the name of Kumara Tatacharya, preceptor of Venkatapatideva I. The tower is raised on a solid granite structure divided into two storeys, both with basements, pilastered projections and wall niches emphasised by variations in mouldings and pediments of different designs. The passageway entrance is bridged by a broad lintel carried on pendant lotus brackets; the interior is flanked by blocked-out



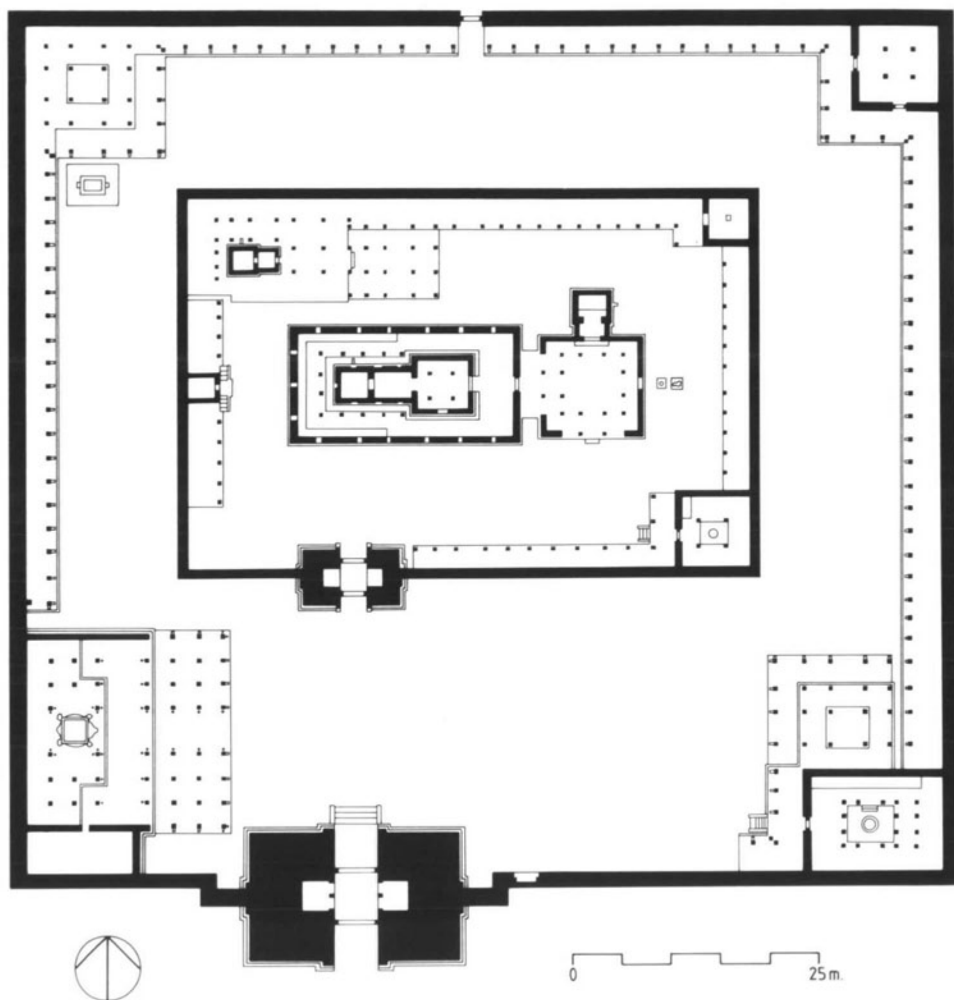
46 Eastern gopura, Varadaraja complex, Kanchipuram, sixteenth century



47 Kalyana mandapa, Varadaraja temple

jambs adorned with goddesses and creeper motifs. The pyramidal tower of brick and mortar presents a skilful arrangement of nine diminishing storeys, each with windows in the middle of the long sides. The capping shala roof has arched ends and pot-like finials aligned along the ridge. Fully modelled plaster figures conceal many of the architectural elements.

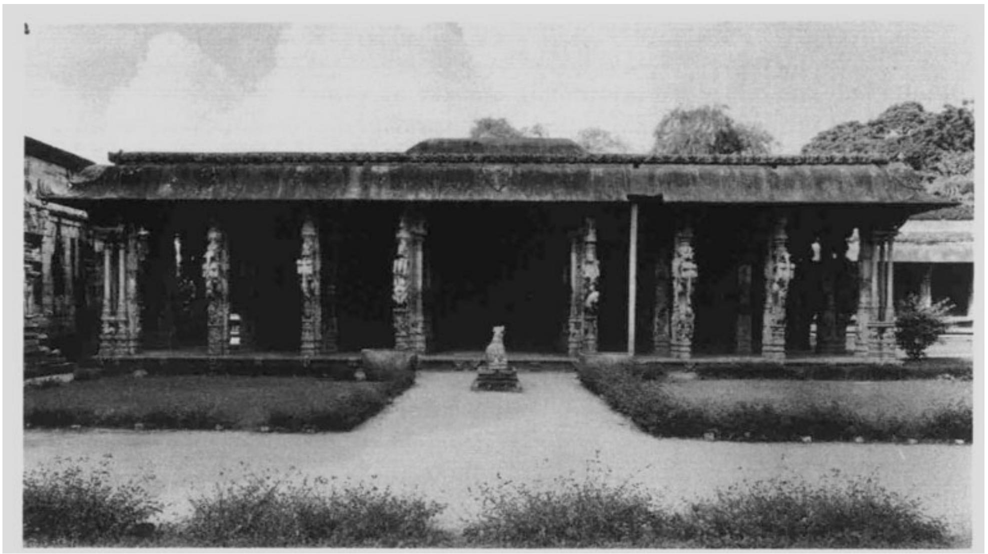
But gopuras were not the only contributions of the Aravidus; many columned halls of considerable artistic merit also date from this era. The kalyana mandapa that stands freely in the outermost enclosure of the Varadaraja temple at Kanchipuram, near to the west gopura, has already been proposed as one of the outstanding structures of the period (Fig. 47, see also Fig. 44). It was erected by Alagia Manavala Jiyar, superintendent of the temple,



48 Plan, Jalakanteshvara complex, Vellore, sixteenth century

at some date in the second half of the sixteenth century. The structure is raised on a basement, regularly punctuated by small niches; yali balustrades flank the staircase on the south. It is for the sculptural treatment of its columns and piers that the hall is best known. Fully modelled warriors on rearing horses appear on the periphery, being doubled at the corners with yalis in between. The same motifs appear in multiple form on the piers surrounding the elaborate dais at the northern end of the mandapa. Crouching yalis and elongated lotus buds serve as brackets to support the roof beams.

Of even greater artistic interest is the kalyana mandapa of the Jalakanteshvara temple within the fort at Vellore, about 60 kilometres west of Kanchipuram (Fig. 48). Virtually no historical information is available for this



49 Kalyana mandapa, Jalakanteshvara complex

50 Ceiling, kalyana mandapa, Jalakanteshvara complex

monument, though it is traditionally associated with Chinna Bomma in the second half of the sixteenth century. The mandapa referred to here, however, is a later addition, possibly by the emperor Venkatapatideva after he took direct control of the fort in 1604; if so, it is the masterpiece of Aravidu architecture. The temple is entered on the south through a gopura with double pilastered walls and seven diminishing storeys; the kalyana mandapa is located immediately inside the gateway (Fig. 49). Its outer piers are fashioned as rearing animals, both yalis and horses, all with riders (see Fig. 139). Elongated colonettes of slender proportions mark the corner piers as well as those lining the main aisle. The central ceiling panel has a deeply modelled lotus flower with parrots hanging upside down surrounded by a ring of dancing figures and rows of miniature deities (Fig. 50). A smaller gopura, also on the south, gives access to the inner enclosure. The principal linga shrine that stands here is a modest structure in the typical Vijayanagara manner; its moulded basement and pilastered niches are concealed by the unadorned walls of the surrounding passageway. The adjoining mandapa has a small rectangular shrine reserved for Nataraja on the north; it is open on the south, but has only a small pierced stone window on the east. Beyond, on axis with the linga shrine, stand a flag-pole and a Nandi.

Among the other examples of the ornate Aravidu style are the twin kalyana mandapas that occupy the two western corners of the Marghabhandu temple at Vrinchipuram, a small town 12 kilometres west of Vellore. Together with the mandapa in front of the east entrance (Fig. 51), these halls combine riders on yalis and elongated colonettes.

TEMPLES OF THE GINGEE NAYAKAS

The Nayakas of Gingee made grants to many important religious centres within their realm, as is shown by the extensions of Krishnappa II to the Govindaraja shrine in the Chidambaram complex. But these rulers were never temple builders on the scale of the Nayakas of Thanjavur and Madurai (see below); their benefactions did not even include additions to the nearby Tiruvannamalai complex, which at this time came under the sway of the Thanjavur Nayakas.

The dilapidated Venkataramana complex inside the Gingee fort is an early Nayaka project. Though it lacks a foundation inscription, it was probably erected at some date in the middle of the sixteenth century. The temple is large and well planned, and mostly belongs to a single phase of construction; its architecture is simple and massive, with little sculptural elaboration. The inner enclosure contains the main east-facing shrine which is approached through a sequence of two mandapas, one smaller and enclosed, the other larger and open. Guardian figures are placed at either side of the mandapa doorway.



51 Entrance mandapa, Marghabhandu complex, Vrinchipuram, sixteenth century

Goddess shrines occupy the two western corners of the enclosure, each with a small mandapa in which piers have multiple colonettes; a third shrine, with Narasimha and Krishna carvings, projects away from the middle of the western wall of the compound. The outer enclosure is partly occupied by free-standing halls, including a kalyana mandapa with openings on three sides and a dais at the rear. The principal gopura in the middle of the eastern side is aligned with the smaller entrance gateway of the inner enclosure. Tall swing pavilions stand outside the walls of the complex, each with multiple brick towers (Fig. 52).

The Bhuvaraha complex at Srimushnam, almost 100 kilometres south of Gingee, is perhaps the finest of all projects associated with the Gingee Nayakas. Unlike many other temples in the Tamil country, no part of its construction actually predates the late sixteenth century; much of the building appears to have been the work of Krishnappa II, whose portrait is included in the overall sculptural programme. The walls of the west-facing sanctuary and its two antechambers are raised on finely finished basement mouldings. An elegantly curved spout protrudes on the south side, its fluted

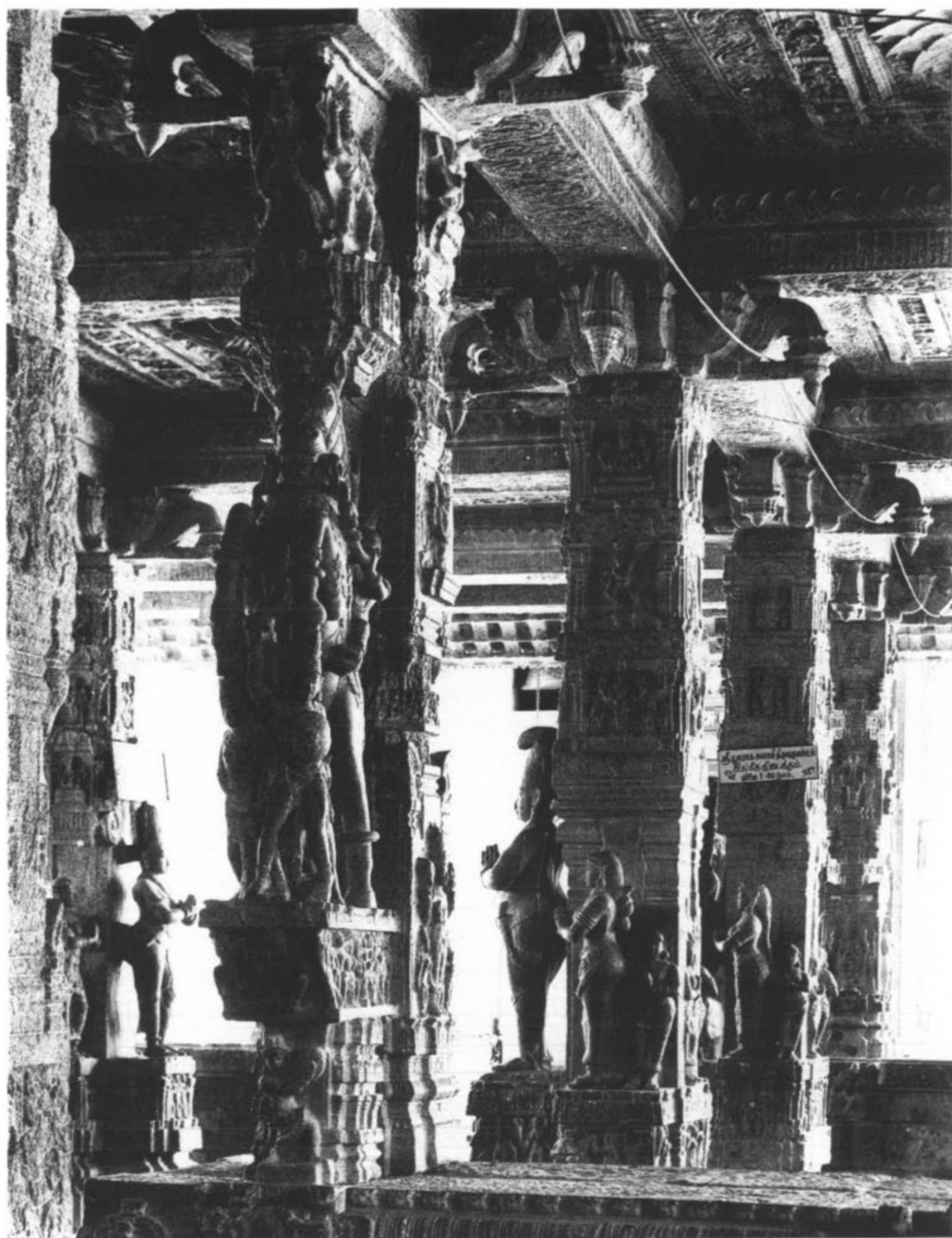


52 Swing pavilion, Pattabhirama temple, Gingee, sixteenth century



53 Vimana spout, Bhuvaraha temple, Srimushnam, sixteenth century

sides emerging from an open monster head; a small seated lion supports the spout (Fig. 53). The walls above make use of pilasters with fluted shafts, double capitals and pendant lotus brackets to mark the projections; niches are capped by shallow cornices and shala roof forms. The multi-storeyed tower,



54 Mandapa with donor sculptures, Bhuvaraha temple

now restored, has a kuta roof. Immediately west of the sanctuary is an enclosed mandapa with colonettes and lion brackets on the piers.

A small entrance doorway leads from the vimana of the Bhuvaraha temple to an open six-bayed mandapa with a raised basement on all sides. Rearing yalis with riders protrude from the central outer piers, while the corner piers have clusters of colonettes; the four piers in the middle have fully sculptured donor figures (Fig. 54, see also Fig. 133). The central ceiling panel has a complex geometric design with lotus petals and parrots surrounded by friezes of female dancers. A long hall, with a wide central aisle flanked by piers with multiple brackets in the typical seventeenth-century style, leads to the main gopura. This entrance is an impressive structure, the lower walls being divided into two tiers of pilastered walls; its pyramidal, brick and plaster tower has been much restored.

The long building history of the Vriddhagirishvara temple at Vriddhachalam, 20 kilometres north of Srimushnam, includes important extensions dating from the end of the sixteenth century. Among those parts of the complex added by the Gingee Nayakas are the columned hall incorporating a small Natesha shrine directly east of the principal sanctuary, and the monumental gopuras on the north and south sides of the outermost compound. These two gateways are of the evolved type, with double pilastered walls, and central passageways. Much of the plaster sculpture that crowds the seven diminishing storeys of the pyramidal towers is no earlier than the seventeenth century.

Yet another complex that was extensively renovated by the Gingee Nayakas is the Bhaktavatsala temple at Tirukkalikundram, a sacred site 10 kilometres inland from the Bay of Bengal. Four equally sized gopuras in the peripheral walls of the outermost compound are assigned to the first half of the seventeenth century. Their identical, steeply pyramidal profiles, with prominent frontal projections, give the complex an overall symmetry and aesthetic unity. The columned hall connecting the doorway to the principal sanctuary with the Natesha shrine has piers carved with riders on horses, with yali brackets above. A short distance east of the complex are two large tanks surrounded by steps; one has a small pavilion in the middle.

TEMPLES OF THE THANJAVUR NAYAKAS

Ruling from the ancient capital of the Cholas, the Nayakas of Thanjavur controlled the wealthy rice-producing lands of the Kaveri Delta, the most densely populated area of the central Tamil zone. Though they constructed several smaller temples at Thanjavur, such as the Rajagopala Perumal dating from the second half of the sixteenth century, the Nayakas were not responsible for any major new foundations within the walls of their own



55 Nandi pavilion, Brihadishvara temple, Thanjavur, seventeenth century

capital. Even so, they renovated and extended the Chola-period Brihadishvara temple, repainting the walls of the passageway surrounding the main linga shrine (see Fig. 173), adding a sculptured projection to the east face of the tower and completing the long mandapa that precedes the sanctuary, which had remained unfinished since Chola times. The piers with lion and lotus capitals lining the central aisle of this hall, as well as those with elongated yalis and attached colonettes framing the entrance porch, are typical of the late sixteenth century. The open pavilion sheltering a large sculptured Nandi that stands to the east of the main shrine is also a Nayaka structure (Fig. 55). The inner columns have a pair of donor portraits, in combination with rearing yalis.

The finest of the Nayaka additions to the Brihadishvara complex, however, is the Subrahmanya shrine in the north-west corner of the compound (Fig. 56). This temple consists of an entrance porch, enclosed mandapa, antechamber and vimana, all aligned on an east–west axis. Though undated, its features are typical of the architectural style of the reign of Raghunatha in the early seventeenth century. The outer walls have part-circular pilasters with fluted and multi-faceted shafts and miniature lotus brackets; some pilasters stand in pots, others support shala-shaped pediments above the sculpture niches.



56 Subrahmanya shrine, Brihadishvara complex

Windows of pierced stone with geometric designs illuminate the antechamber within. An elaborate brick and plaster parapet, also divided into niches with kuta and shala forms, runs into the ascending storeys of the square tower which is capped with a hemispherical roof. The entrance porch has access steps flanked by superimposed yali and elephant balustrades; carvings of wheels and leaping horses suggest a moving chariot. Piers with groups of square colonettes and enlarged lotus brackets are overhung by double-curved eaves. The adjoining mandapa is a later addition; the triple-bayed openings on three sides being partly filled in during the Maratha era when paintings were added to the walls.

Among the extensions ordered by the Thanjavur rulers to earlier temples were the outer gopuras at Tiruvannamalai (Fig. 57). Shivappa was responsible for initiating work in 1572 on the eleven diminishing storeys and capping shala roof of the Raya Gopura on the east side of the complex. Its majestic scale, with a height of 66 metres, and fully realised decorative scheme make this one of the finest gateways of the Nayaka period (Fig. 58). The basement combines delicately worked sculptural friezes with differently shaped mouldings, some with jewelled ribs. The pilasters framing the wall projections are part-octagonal or fluted; flat pilasters stand in ribbed pots. The niches, most of



57 Gopuras, Arunachaleshvara complex, Tiruvannamalai, seventeenth century

which are filled with fully modelled sculptures, are framed by part-circular pilasters supporting shala roofs in shallow reliefs. Miniature carvings, such as prancing yalis, adorn the pilasters and fill the wall surfaces in between; fully carved rearing beasts enliven the cornice above. The interior of the passageway is equally ornate. Delicately modelled maidens embellish the columns and door jambs (see Fig. 132); foliate designs, including looped stalks with miniature deities, and a scene of elephants engaged in battle are carved in shallow relief on the undersides of the lintels and beams (Fig. 59).

Kumbakonam, second city of the Thanjavur kingdom, is distinguished by its many large-scale religious monuments. In spite of the fact that they are mostly Chola foundations, the temples owe their present appearance to the extensive building campaigns of the Nayakas. The ritual focus of the town is the irregularly shaped Mahamakam bathing tank. The sixteen small pavilions overlooking the water were erected in the early seventeenth century by Govinda Dikshita, chief minister of Raghunatha. One pavilion has a raised dais in the middle for displaying processional images; sculptured panels adorn the corner columns (Fig. 60). A pyramidal tower capped with the usual hemispherical roof rises over the central bay.

Govinda Dikshita was also responsible for major religious constructions within the city, including the columned mandapa extending northwards from the main shrine of the Ramasvami complex. The hall is one of the finest achievements of the Thanjavur Nayakas. Two intersecting aisles of spacious proportions are lined with piers (Fig. 61). Each consists of a column shaft,



58 Wall detail, Raya Gopura, Arunachaleshvara complex



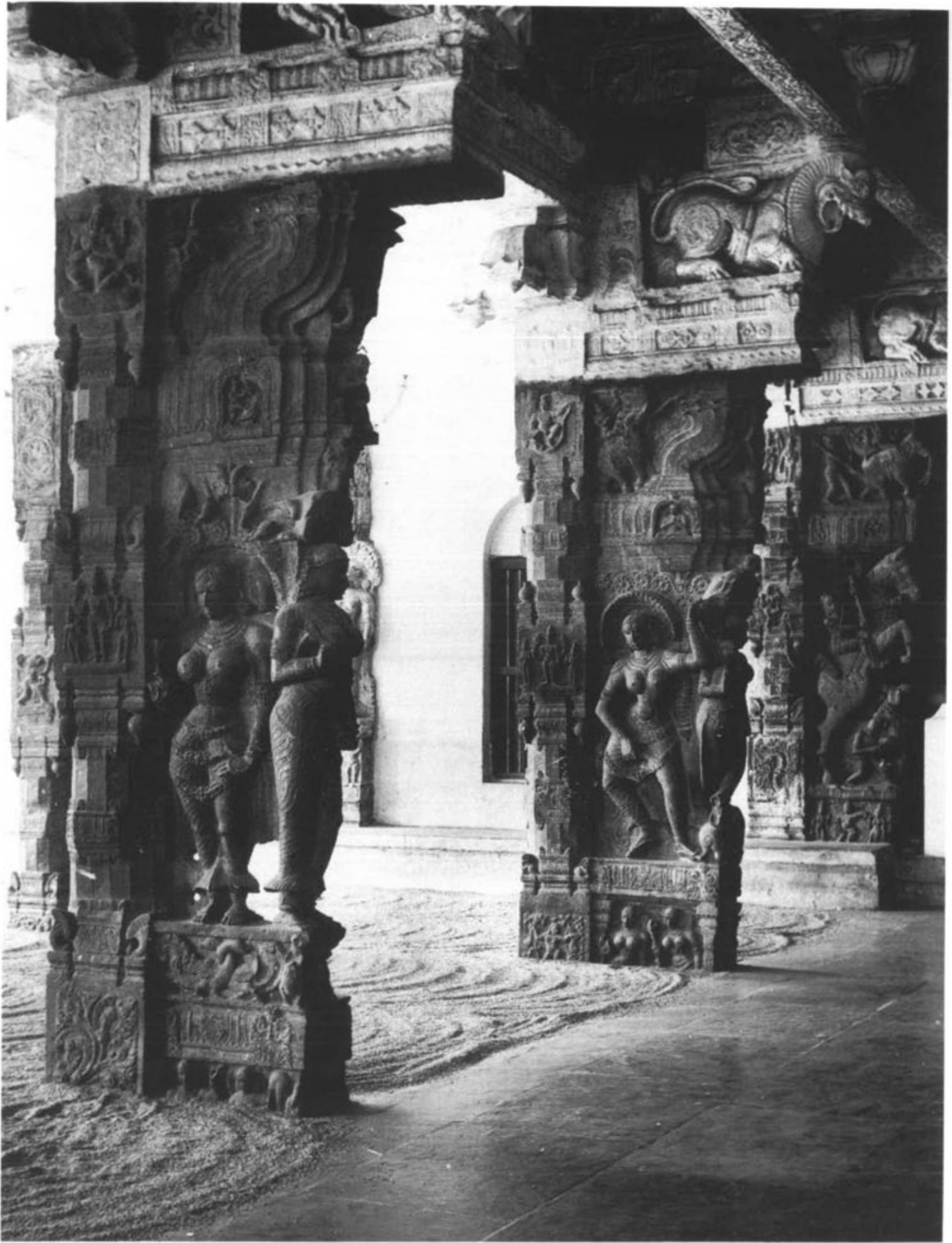
59 Beams in passageway, Raya Gopura, Arunachaleshvara complex



60 Pavilion overlooking Mahamakam tank, Kumbakonam, seventeenth century

complete with triple sets of sculptured blocks and an extension carved with fully modelled figures on the front and sides (see Fig. 131). Curved, leaf-like brackets and crouching yalis support suspended beams that run between the brackets. The gateway on the north side of the mandapa, through which the complex is entered, is attributed to the same patron. Its high basement, pilastered walls and squat pyramidal tower are typical of the seventeenth century. The upper storeys, with their vividly coloured plaster figures, have been totally renovated in recent times.

The Kumbheshvara, with its three concentric compounds, elongated along an east–west axis with triple sets of gopuras, is the largest and most important of the Kumbakonam temples. A long colonnaded market crowded with shops leads to the monumental gateway that marks the outer entrance to the sacred precinct. A second colonnaded corridor links this gopura with an intermediate one of lesser proportions. The spacious columned mandapa which lies beyond has intersecting central aisles defined by sculptured piers, exactly as in the Ramasvami temple. The raised ceiling over the crossing of the two aisles is carved with signs of the zodiac in shallow relief. A third, yet smaller inner

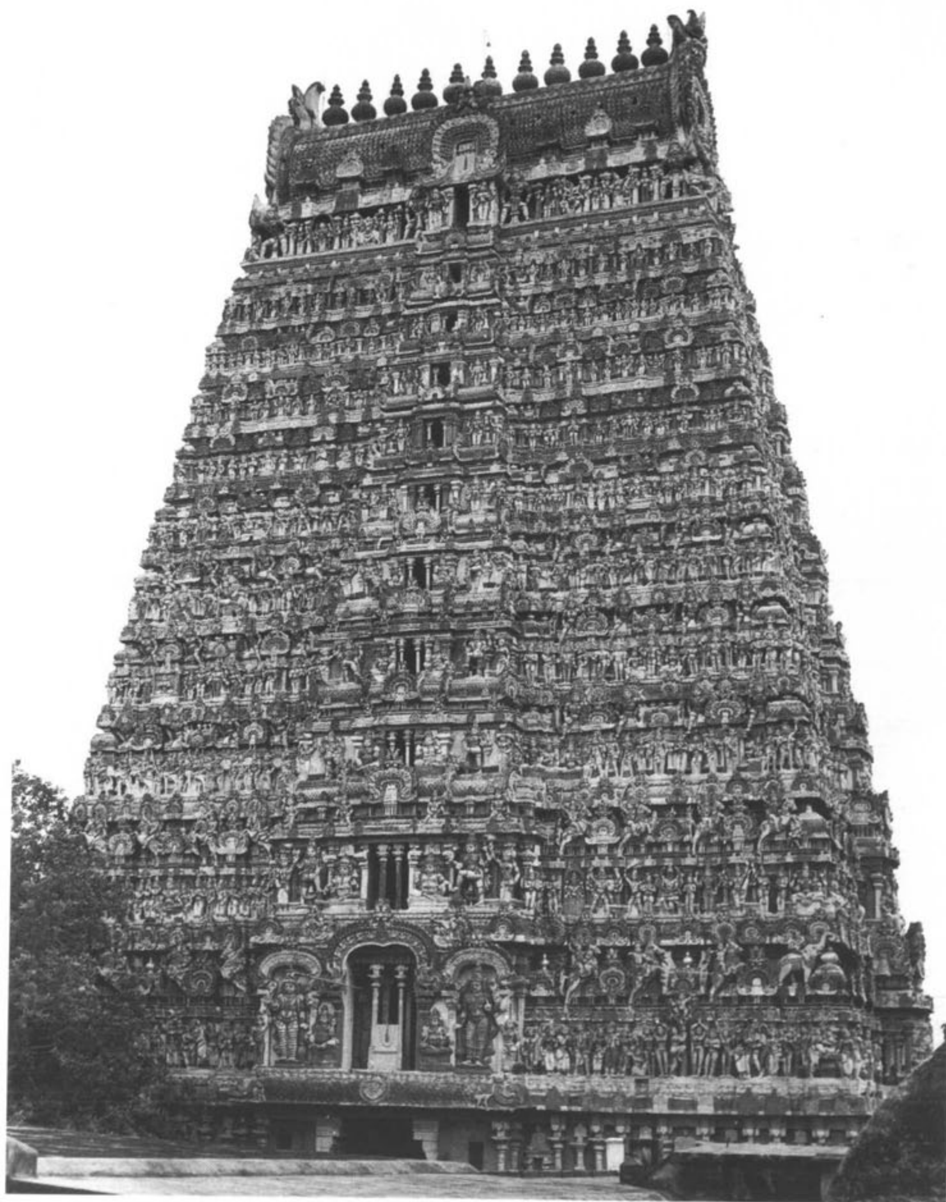


61 Mandapa piers, Ramasvami temple, Kumbakonam, seventeenth century

gopura gives access to the compound where the main sanctuary is situated. It is attached to a partly open mandapa, with a small rectangular Natesha shrine on the north side.

The elongated configuration of the Kumbheshvara is echoed in another monument at Kumbakonam, the Sarangapani, which is also entered through a succession of three gopuras on the east. The outermost gateway, which dominates the skyline of the city, reaches a height of almost 50 metres (Fig. 62). The pilastered walls of its lower granite structure are elevated on a high basement; sculptured panels depict female dancers. Prominent projections in the middle of the long sides of the tower have openings with intermediate slender stone colonettes at each of the eleven ascending levels. A hundred-columned mandapa with openings on three sides stands within the outermost enclosure of the temple; a hall with intersecting aisles takes up most of the intermediate enclosure. The principal shrine in the innermost enclosure partly belongs to the pre-Nayaka period; the dating of the remainder of the structure, however, is difficult to ascertain since the architecture faithfully imitates Chola models. The vimana is of particular interest because of the large elephants, prancing horses and wheels carved on to its ornate basement; the spokes of the wheels have lotuses and miniature figures. The shrine itself cannot be approached directly from the east: devotees ascend staircases at the two western corners that lead to a small mandapa. Twelve columns inside the mandapa have tiers of miniature temple façades carved on to the shafts; the ceiling above has a lotus surrounded by miniature figures. A pierced stone window is set into the east wall of the mandapa, on axis with the doorway leading to the sanctuary. A gopura to the west of the principal shrine overlooks a square tank with a central pavilion that lies outside the complex.

One of the largest projects sponsored by the Thanjavur Nayakas in the towns of the Kaveri Delta is that at Tiruvidaimarudur, 12 kilometres east of Kumbakonam. The extensive double temple here consists of twin Mahalinga and Devi shrines; Govinda Dikshita is once again the main sponsor. Though the original Shiva shrine and attached mandapa of the innermost compound at Tiruvidaimarudur have been rebuilt almost entirely in recent years, they are surrounded on four sides by a colonnaded corridor that preserves its original Nayaka features. The piers standing on the raised floor level have attached colonettes, lotus brackets and suspended beams; subshrines dedicated to Nataraja and Murugan are fitted into the spaces between the piers. The corridor intersects with another in front of the entrance to the principal sanctuary; the ceiling over the crossing is embellished with zodiac motifs in shallow relief. The intermediate enclosure is partly occupied by a similar corridor that marks the route from the gopura in the middle of the east side towards the sanctuary. One structure here, possibly a granary, is roofed with a curved masonry vault. The goddess shrine that stands in its own compound



62 Eastern gopura, Sarangapani complex, Kumbakonam, seventeenth century

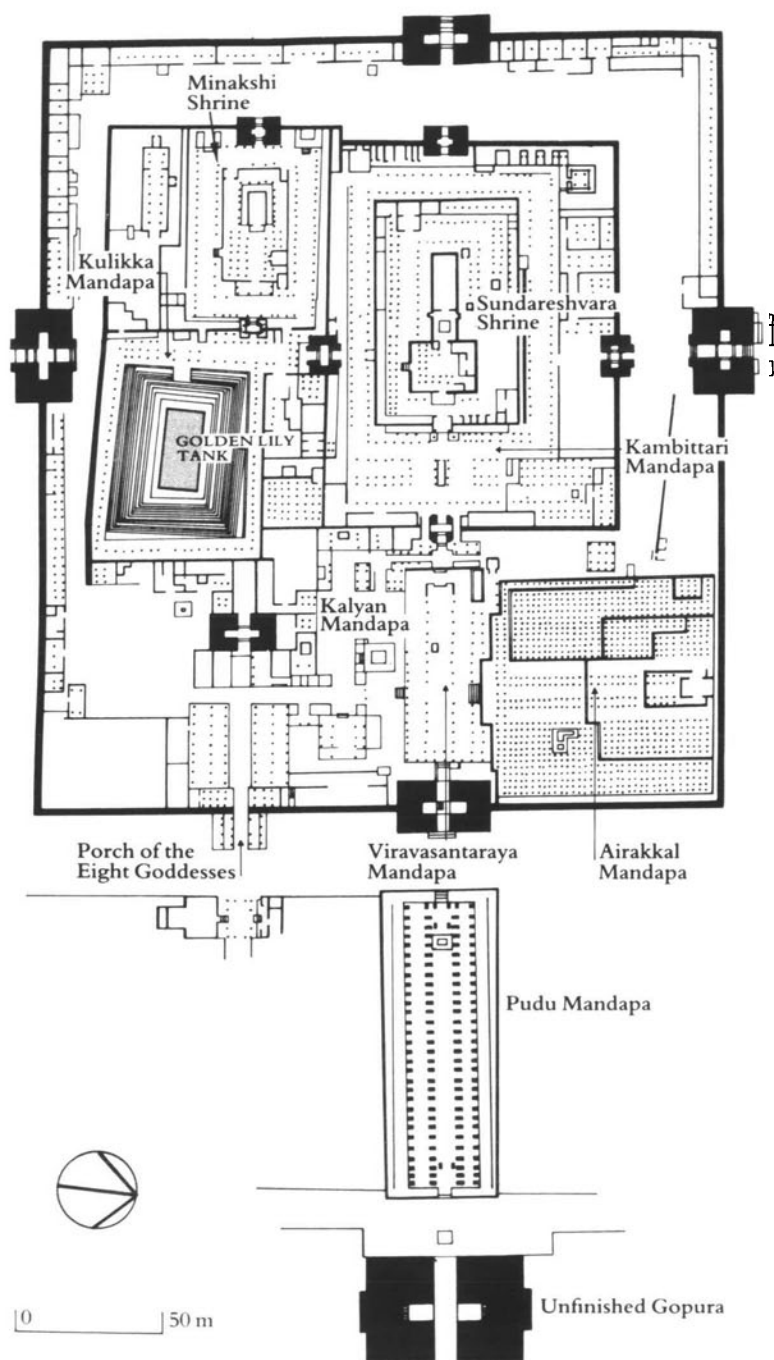
immediately to the south is also entered through a gopura on the east side. Access corridors and free-standing mandapas occupy much of the outermost compound.

TEMPLES OF THE MADURAI NAYAKAS AT THE CAPITAL

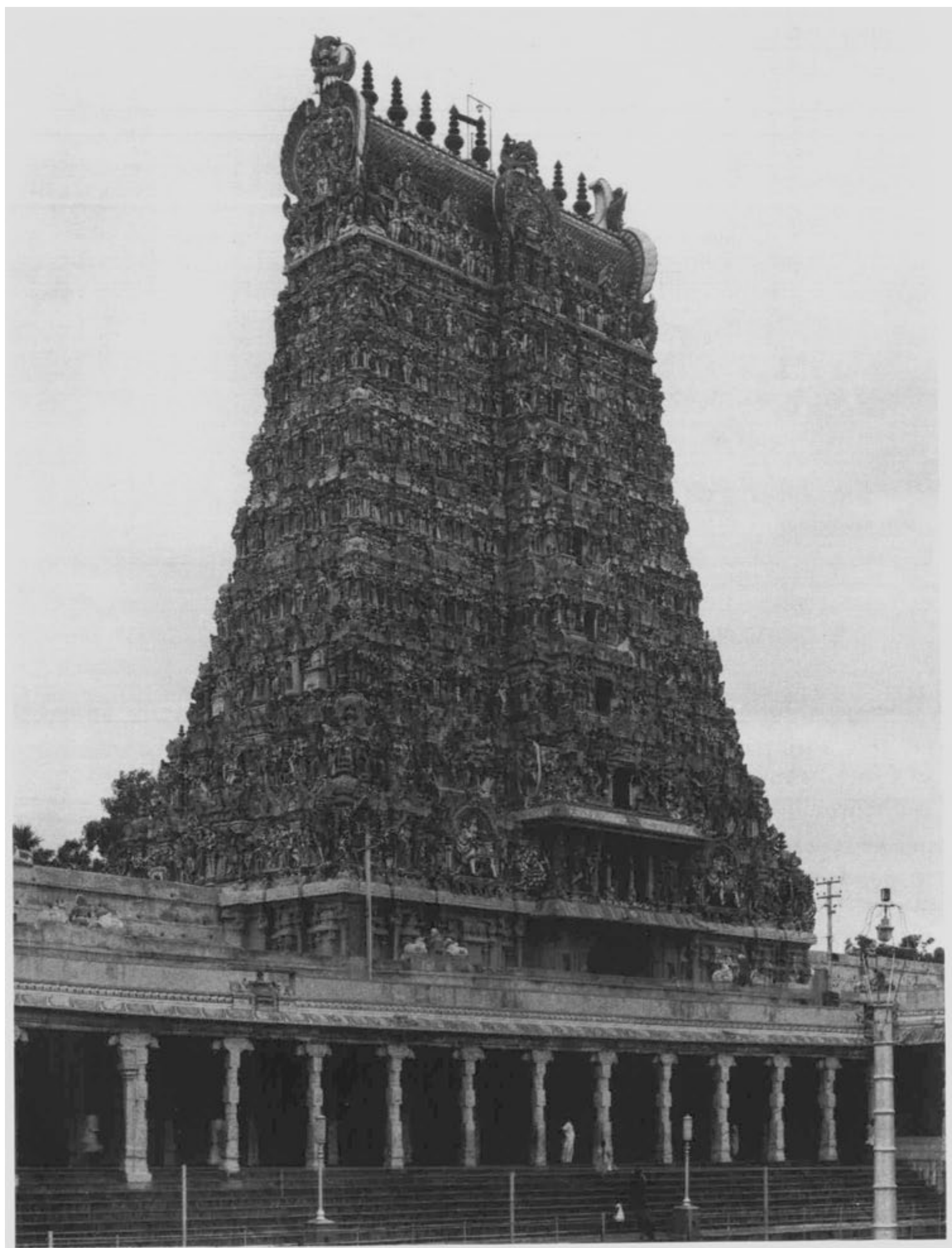
Of all the Nayakas, those of Madurai were by far the greatest builders; their careers spanned the second half of the sixteenth century and the whole of the seventeenth century, and even continued into the first decades of the eighteenth century. During much of this time these rulers controlled a substantial portion of the Tamil country, from the Kaveri to Kanyakumari. Madurai had been furnished with a major temple in Pandya times, but this was largely demolished when the city became the headquarters for a local line of Sultans. After the recovery of the city by Kumara Kampana, the twin shrines dedicated to Minakshi, tutelary goddess of Madurai, and her consort Sundareshvara, were substantially rebuilt. Renovation of the monument continued throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but by far the greatest efforts were made from the middle of the sixteenth century onwards under the direction of the local Nayakas. Almost all of the Madurai rulers, their wives and ministers made donations to the Minakshi-Sundareshvara temple; many parts of the monument are associated with one or other of these patrons.

The Madurai complex is contained within high enclosure walls that create a vast rectangle of 254 by 238 metres; lofty gopuras are positioned in the middle of each side (Fig. 63, see also Fig. 42). The towers of these gateways have elongated proportions and curved profiles that achieve a dramatic sweep upwards; that on the south is almost 50 metres high (Fig. 64). The lower granite portions have pilasters with slender, part-circular and fluted shafts; many of these define projections without niches headed by shala and kuta pediments (Fig. 65). The carvings here are confined to miniature animals and figures at the bases of pilasters and on wall surfaces in between. The brick superstructures have pronounced central projections with openings at each of the nine ascending storeys. The lowest of these openings, immediately above the eaves sheltering the entrance passageways, are distinguished by free-standing colonettes. Plaster sculptures, reworked and brightly painted in recent years, are applied to almost all of the architectural elements to create vivid polychrome effects. Enlarged yali heads with protruding eyes and horns mark the arched ends of the capping shala roofs; the ridges have rows of pot-like finials in brass.

The Minakshi temple is usually entered from the east through a porch projecting outwards beyond the enclosure wall. This porch was erected by Rudrapati and Toli Ammai, consorts of Tirumala Nayaka. Four columns on



63 Plan, Minakshi-Sundareshvara complex, Madurai, seventeenth–eighteenth centuries



64 South gopura, Minakshi-Sundareshvara complex, seventeenth century



65 Wall detail, north gopura, Minakshi-Sundareshvara complex

either side have carvings of different goddesses; the curved vault above is covered with paintings of recent workmanship. A doorway flanked by images of Ganesha and Subrahmanya leads into a vast columned hall used for shops and stores. This structure was added in 1707 by Sanmugam Minakshi, minister of Vijayaranga Chokkanatha. Its piers have lion-like brackets carrying suspended beams. At the far end of this mandapa is a doorway contained within a towered gateway that was erected in 1569 by a son of Ariyanatha Mudaliyar, minister of Kumara Krishnappa. Beyond is a small corridor flanked by columns with sculptured figures. This gives on to the courtyard of the Potramarai Kulam, a rectangular reservoir with stepped sides and a gilded lamp-column in the middle (Fig. 66). The north and east walls of the surrounding colonnade are covered with murals, now sadly dilapidated. Royal portraits adorn two columns on the north side of the tank; a painted composition of the marriage of Minkashi and Sundareshvara covers the ceiling of a small portico on the west.

A long corridor defines the transverse north–south axis of the Minakshi-Sundareshvara complex. The columns lining its central aisle have three-dimensional sculptures of deities, heroes and rearing yalis. The Minakshi shrine, together with several subshrines, stands inside a rectangular compound to the west. A gopura at the northern end of the corridor provides access to the Sundareshvara shrine. This too is contained within a rectangular enclosure,



66 Potramarai Kulam, Minakshi-Sundareshvara complex

marked by towered gopuras in the middle of each side. The granite basements, pilastered niches and brick superstructures of these gateways resemble those on the periphery of the complex, except that they are not as high. A colonnaded corridor entirely surrounds the Sundareshvara compound. On the east it meets the Kambattadi Mandapa, an addition of the early eighteenth century. In the middle of this hall is a group of eight piers with fully sculptured figures set within cutout pilasters (see Fig. 135). The piers surround the flag-pole, altar and small Nandi pavilion, the last with its own ornate domed roof, aligned with the main sanctuary to the west.

Beyond the Kambattadi Mandapa, in the outermost enclosure of the Madurai complex, is the Viravasantaraya Mandapa, another project of Vijayaranga Chokkanatha (Fig. 67). Its central corridor, which is no less than 75 metres long, is lined with piers displaying yalis alternating with quartets of



67 Viravasantaraya Mandapa, Minakshi-Sundareshvara complex, eighteenth century

part-square colonettes in shallow relief; leaf-like motifs and crouching animals adorn the brackets. To the north is the thousand-pillared hall, now converted into an art museum. Of the exactly 985 elaborately decorated columns incorporated into this mandapa, some have fully modelled figures, both divine and royal. Yalis line the central aisle that leads to the raised dais at the northern end of the mandapa. At the southern end is a porch with finely carved columns, those at the corners being surrounded by dense clusters of slender colonettes.

Outside the complex, directly on axis with the east gopura leading to the Sundareshvara shrine, stands the Pudu Mandapa. This major construction is the work of Tirumala and was completed in 1635; it is now a market for textiles and household goods. The hall, which is almost 100 metres long, is reached by steps flanked by balustrades with vigorously posed yalis. Its broad central aisle is flanked by piers carved with portraits of the Nayakas and their queens. Carvings at the eastern and western extremities of the hall represent horses and yalis with riders on the outside faces of the piers, with major deities on the inside. A small pavilion fashioned out of polished black granite with a wooden roof stands at one end. Further east, beyond the mandapa, are the

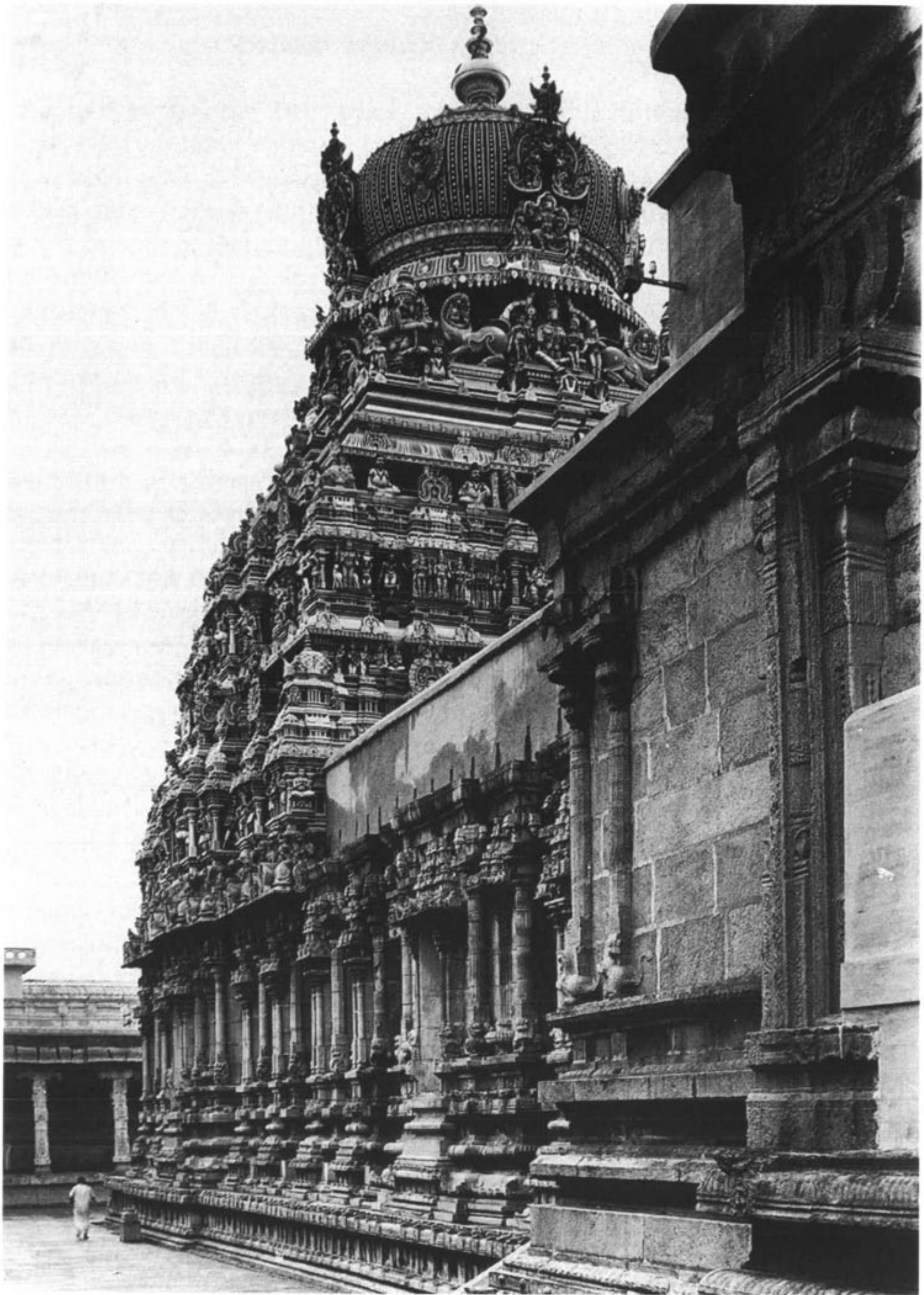
lowest portions of Tirumala's unfinished Raya Gopura; this is more than twice the dimensions of any other gateway at Madurai, the door jambs alone being 15 metres high.

Further evidence of building activities under the Nayakas is found in Madurai. Unlike the Minakshi-Sundareshvara complex, the Kudal Alagar Perumal temple belongs to a single phase of construction that represents the mid-seventeenth-century style at its finest (Fig. 68). The central shrine of this monument is an unusual conception, with three superimposed sanctuaries of diminishing size containing seated, standing and reclining images of Vishnu (bottom to top). The passageway around the lowest shrine is lit by pierced stone screens with graceful designs, including those with figures in entwining stalks (Fig. 69). The outer walls are raised on an elaborate basement, with varying sequences of mouldings beneath the principal projections. Slender pilasters with fluted, multi-faceted and circular shafts have miniature yalis at their bases, and double capitals with pendant lotus brackets at their tops. Miniature temple-like towers in high relief cap single pilasters standing in pots; the same motifs occur over niches and windows. Above rises the steeply pyramidal tower dominated by a crowning hemispherical roof. The core of the monument is approached through two mandapas, the outer one of which is preceded by a porch with staircases on the north and south flanked by elephant and yali balustrades. Its central piers have yalis, while those at the corners have clustered elements; the overhanging eaves have deeply undercut ribs.

The Teppakulam at the eastern edge of Madurai was initiated by Tirumala in 1636 as a setting for festivals in which sacred images were floated in illuminated barges. The square reservoir has steps flanked by animal and bird balustrades leading down to the water in the middle of each side. A sixteen-columned pavilion with a pyramidal tower stands on an island at the centre; it is capped with a kuta roof (Fig. 70). Portrait sculptures adorn the four central columns; slabs cut into the shape of arched openings are placed in between. Smaller but similar pavilions mark the island's four corners.

TEMPLES OF THE MADURAI NAYAKAS OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL

Sacred spots in the immediate vicinity of Madurai were also active sites of construction during the Nayaka period. Among the most important shrines in the region is the Alagar Perumal at Alagarkoil, some 20 kilometres north of the capital, at the foot of a wooded hill. Seventeenth-century additions to the circular sanctuary of the Pandyas include the mandapas to the east. The hall adjoining the main sanctuary has openings in the middle of three sides, with a small part-circular Garuda shrine protruding into the entrance porch. The open mandapa in the outer enclosure has fully modelled animals and figures:



68 Kudal Alagar Perumal temple, Madurai, seventeenth century



69 Window, Kudal Alagar Perumal temple

yalis alternating with deities and courtly donors line the piers of the central hall. The principal gopura is positioned in the middle of the eastern walls of the outer enclosure; its finely modelled pilasters, mostly with yalis at the bases, are typical of the Nayaka style. The Vasanta Mandapa outside the main complex consists of a colonnade surrounding a sixteen-columned pavilion with a raised dais in the middle. Ramayana paintings cover the ceiling and walls (see Fig. 177). A short distance to the south is an overgrown gopura, ambitious in scale but never finished, similar to the uncompleted project of Tirumala at Madurai.

Another place of religious importance in the vicinity of Madurai is the hill at Tirupparankunram, 6 kilometres to the south-west. The core of the complex is a rock-cut shrine dating from the Pandya era. A wide range of deities is carved on to its walls, including Subrahmanya, popularly known as Murugan. As transformed by the Nayakas, this shrine became the focal point of an extensive religious complex. The temple is approached from the north through an



70 Teppakulam, Madurai, seventeenth century

ascending sequence of columned halls linked by multiple flights of steps. Nayaka patronage is evident in the mandapa built immediately in front of the rock-cut shrine, where portraits of Tirumala and other donors are carved on to column shafts. A transverse axis links a small Ganesha shrine on the west with a large stepped tank situated outside the walls on the east. An impressive gopura with a lofty pyramidal tower in the typical seventeenth-century style marks the entrance to the temple at the foot of the hill. It is preceded by an open columned hall, the outer piers of which have rearing animals and clusters of colonettes.

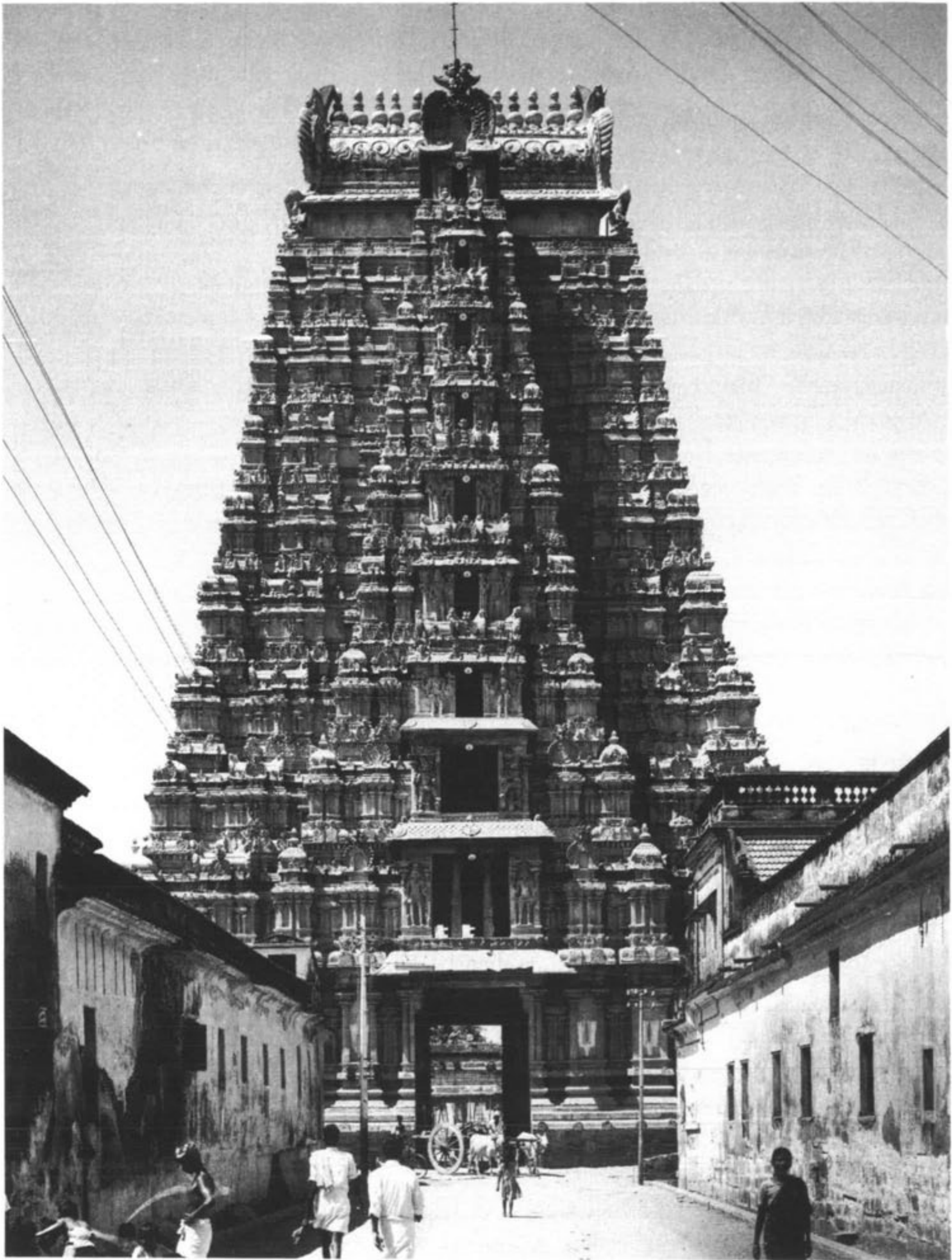
Tiruchirapalli became the second capital of the Madurai Nayakas during the reign of Chokkanatha. One consequence of the increased importance of this city was that building activities escalated at the two great temples on nearby Srirangam Island; both monuments attained their final form during this period. The Ranganatha complex has seven rectangular enclosures, arranged one inside the other. Each compound is punctuated by gopuras in the middle of four sides; the towers increase in height as the complex expands outwards. The largest gopura, in the outermost walls on the south, is an immense structure measuring about 39 by 30 metres in plan. It is built in a style comparable to the grandiloquent schemes already noticed at Madurai and Alagarkoil; like these, it too was left unfinished in the seventeenth century.

Most other gateways at Srirangam, however, are complete. Their towers have pronounced projections in the middle of the long sides, generally with openings on each of the successive levels. The openings of the lowest storeys have free-standing stone colonettes with double capitals overhung by double-curved eaves. The Vellai Gopura on the east side of the fourth enclosure has a steeply pyramidal superstructure that reaches a height of almost 44 metres (Fig. 71).

The Venugopala shrine in the south-west corner of the fourth enclosure of the Srirangam complex is the work of Chokkanatha; an inscription of 1674 specifies this Nayaka as the patron. It is an exquisitely ornamented building (Fig. 72). The exterior of the vimana and attached mandapa have finely worked pilasters with fluted shafts, double capitals and pendant lotus brackets. Sculptures are placed in the niches on three sides of the sanctuary walls; maidens enhance the walls in between (see Fig. 116). The elevation is punctuated with secondary sets of pilasters that support shallow eaves at different levels to cap larger and smaller recesses. The sanctuary is crowned in traditional fashion with a hemispherical roof. The double-curved eaves of the entrance porch on the east side are concealed in a later columned hall.

Another Nayaka addition to the Srirangam complex is the Garuda Mandapa on the south side of the third enclosure. Courtly portrait sculptures, reused from an earlier structure, are fixed to the piers lining the central aisle. A free-standing shrine inside the hall contains a large seated figure of Garuda; the eagle-headed god faces north towards the principal sanctuary. Next to the Ranganatha shrine, in the first enclosure of the temple, is the Kili Mandapa (Fig. 73). Elephant balustrades skirt the access steps that ascend to a spacious open area. This is bounded by decorated piers with rearing animals and attached colonettes in the finest seventeenth-century manner. Four columns in the middle define a raised dais; their shafts are embellished with undulating stalks. The most artistically interesting of the halls that the Nayakas added to this complex is, without doubt, the Shesharaya Mandapa on the east side of the fourth enclosure. The hall is celebrated for the magnificent leaping animals carved on to the piers at its northern end (see Fig. 140).

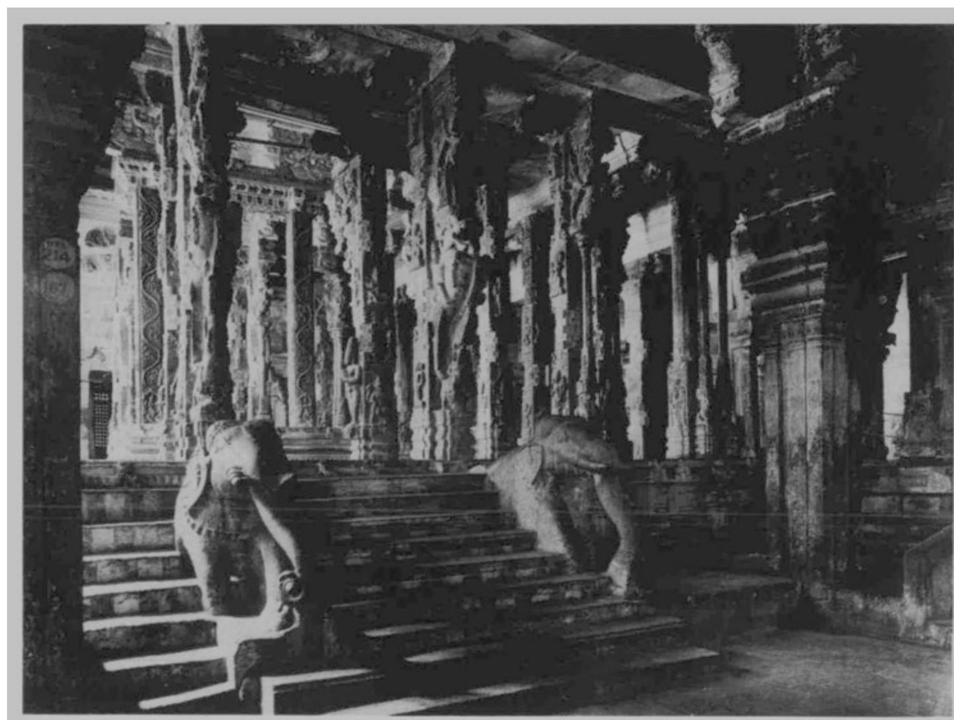
The nearby Jambukeshvara temple is the other great religious monument on Srirangam Island. It is a fine example of the monumental style attained under the Madurai Nayakas towards the end of the seventeenth century. The temple consists of five concentric enclosures, with gopuras aligned along the principal east–west axis; a goddess shrine provided with its own rectangle of walls is located within the fourth enclosure on the north side. Covered spaces take up much of the interior. The innermost enclosure is occupied by a spacious corridor that completely surrounds the core sanctuary, itself a modest shrine dating back to pre-Vijayanagara times. The west side of the third enclosure has a hall with a crossing of two broad aisles; the crossing is marked by four



71 Vellai Gopura, Ranganatha complex, Srirangam, seventeenth century



72 Venugopala shrine, Ranganatha complex, seventeenth century



73 Kili Mandapa, Ranganatha complex, seventeenth–eighteenth centuries

massive piers, each with a cluster of eight projecting animal and lotus brackets. A thousand-columned hall is positioned immediately inside the outermost gopura on the west side of the complex. Its basement is sculptured with prancing horses and wheels. The hall faces south towards a large square tank.

TEMPLES OF THE SUBORDINATES OF MADURAI

During the period of the Madurai Nayakas, the territory south of the capital was partly under the control of a number of local chiefs. Like the Nayakas, these lesser figures sponsored religious projects, including several large-scale complexes which were, in effect, double temples. At Srivilliputtur, for instance, adjacent shrines consecrated to Vatapatrashayi, a form of Vishnu, and to Andal are each provided with their own concentric system of rectangular compounds. The principal entrance to the Vatapatrashayi monument is an eleven-storeyed gateway reaching an impressive height of 59 metres, making it the tallest gopura of the era (see Fig. 43). Its slightly curved tower is comparable to the superstructures of the Madurai gopuras, though it may be slightly later; the upper storeys are almost totally devoid of sculptures. The adjacent Andal complex is also of interest. A small pavilion stands freely in the middle of the hall that precedes the main sanctuary. Its canopy is covered with sheets of brass; the same material clads portraits of Tirumala and other members of the Madurai royal family carved on to the columns. An open hall and colonnaded corridor run eastwards from the principal gopura, extending beyond the walls of the precinct. The piers here are sculptured as gigantic yalis (Fig. 74).

Tirunelveli was the most important city in the well-populated Tambarapani valley in the extreme south of the Tamil zone. The Nellaiyappa complex incorporates local wooden architecture. The timber-vaulted roof of the entrance porch that precedes the main gopura is adorned with carved struts. The free-standing pavilion in the north-west corner of the intermediate enclosure has carved wooden screens, columns and ceiling struts, the last fashioned as miniature deities and attendant figures; the pyramidal roof is sheathed with copper tiles. The principal shrine of the complex is approached from the east through a large columned hall, its central aisle being flanked by piers with lotus and lion brackets. The porch attached to this mandapa is reached by staircases on the north and south. The piers at the corners have groups of forty-nine colonettes concealing the shafts; those in the middle display fully modelled figures brandishing clubs. The overhanging eaves are enlivened with carved monkeys and scrollwork. Equally exuberant sculptures of mythical heroes adorn the piers in the intermediate enclosure. A large seated Nandi occupies the middle of an impressive columned hall. The associated goddess temple at Tirunelveli is dedicated to Kantimati Ambal; it is linked to the Nellaiyappa complex by a gopura in the common enclosure wall. This



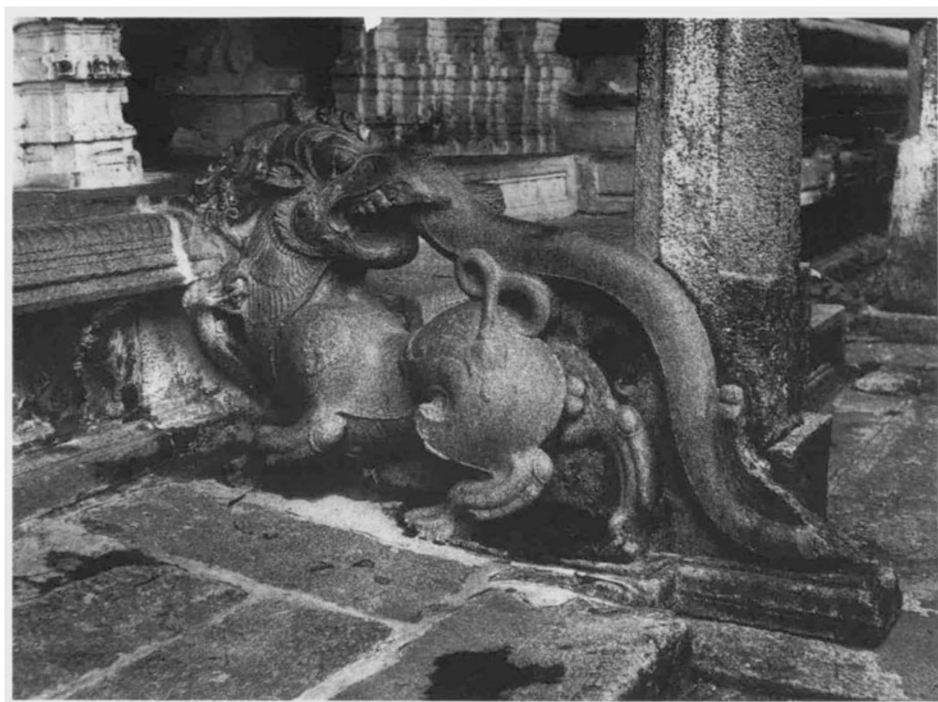
74 Yali piers, corridor, Andal temple, Srivilliputtur, seventeenth century

leads to a long corridor lined with squat piers sculptured with rearing yalis and heroic figures.

A series of temples similar to that at Tirunelveli is distributed at sites along both banks of the Tambarapani. The Adinatha temple at Alvartirunagari, 30 kilometres east of Tirunelveli, displays the same expansive layout, with detached mandapas, some with decorated piers displaying large numbers of slender colonettes (Fig. 75). The sculptural treatment of the architectural



75 Cluster of colonettes, mandapa, Adinatha temple, Alvartirunagari, seventeenth century



76 Yali balustrade, Satyavagishvara temple, Kalakkadu, seventeenth century

elements is sometimes richly conceived, as in the Satyavagishvara temple at Kalakkadu, an almost equal distance south of Tirunelveli. Balustrades in this monument, for example, are exuberant demonstrations of the carvers' art, with fully modelled yalis with undulating snouts (Fig. 76). One of the finest of these complexes is that at Krishnapuram, 12 kilometres east of Tirunelveli. The temple of Venkatachala at this site belongs to the end of the Nayaka period and appears to have been commissioned by a local figure. It is notable for the fully modelled figures sculptured on to the piers: heroes, attendant women and yalis adorn the spacious mandapa that precedes the shrine, as well as the detached mandapa in the outer enclosure.

Similar sculptures adorn the piers of the Vishvanatha temple at Tenkasi. This town was the headquarters of the Pandya chiefs (who claimed descent from the earlier rulers of the same name); for a time it was also under the control of the Venad kings. As in many of the other temples in this part of the Tamil country, the enclosure between the two principal entrance gopuras is occupied by a mandapa with richly sculptured piers. Gods and goddesses are carved almost in three dimensions, virtually free of their supports (see Fig. 136). Other exuberant carvings are found in the mandapa attached to the

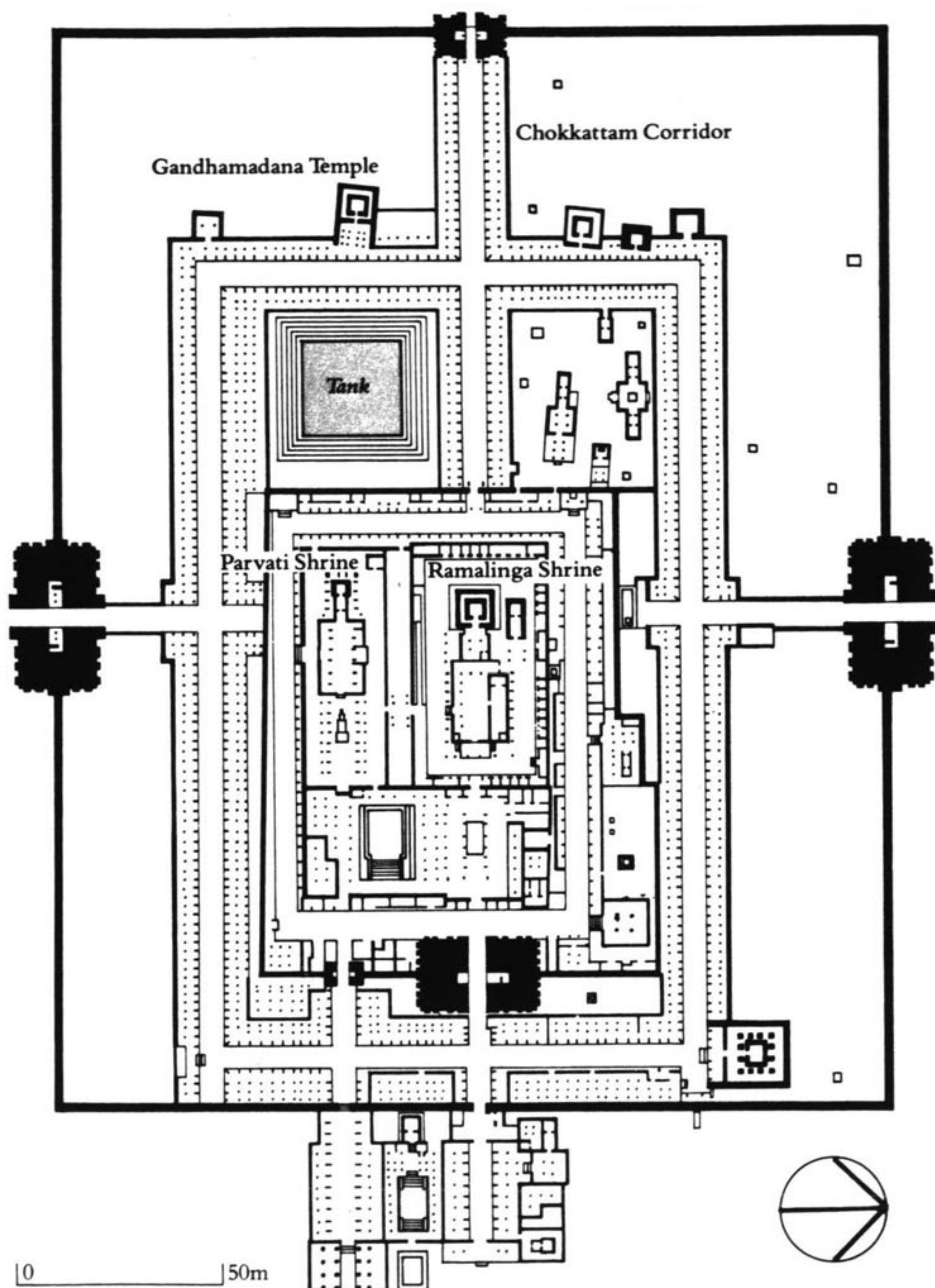
nearby Subrahmanya shrine. Yalis are carved on the twelve piers that define the central hall space of an open mandapa; the corner animals are angled inwards. The entrance gopura to the complex has finely worked wooden doors with carved panels.

TEMPLES OF THE TONDAIMANS AND SETUPATIS

Despite comparatively limited resources, the rulers of the Tondaiman and Marava states that broke away from the Madurai kingdom were able to sponsor several large-scale religious monuments. The building activities of the Tondaimans in the early eighteenth century are represented by the additions that they made to the Gokarneshvara temple on the outskirts of their headquarters at Pudukkottai. The core of the complex consists of a number of shrines, some cut deep into natural boulders, dating back to Pandya times. Under the Tondaimans these sanctuaries were enclosed in a rectangle of walls and linked by colonnades and halls. The most impressive extension was a series of structures that created a ceremonial approach to the temple from the south. The columned mandapa situated between two imposing gopuras has its piers carved with horses with riders, yalis and enlarged deities; the central ceiling panel displays the signs of the zodiac. A transverse aisle connects a dais for displaying images with a sixteen-columned mandapa standing freely in a small court. Beyond the outer gopura is an extremely long corridor with its ceiling painted with Ramayana panels.

Almost all of the Setupatis of Ramanathapuram contributed to the augmentation of the Ramanatha complex on Rameswaram Island (Fig. 77). The most extensive work took place in the first half of the eighteenth century under Muttu Kumara Raghunatha and Muttu Ramalinga when the sanctuary and its associated bathing spots were transformed into a coordinated architectural ensemble. These kings were responsible for erecting the outermost rectangle of walls, with substantial gopuras in the middle of three sides; those on the north and south were never finished. A third gopura in the middle of the east side of the intermediate enclosure is an earlier construction of Sadaikkar Tevan. The gateways all have massive pilastered walls; interior passageways are flanked by jambs with yali brackets above.

Two entrances on the east of the Rameswaram temple, one on axis with the linga sanctuary, the other with the Devi shrine, are approached through columned mandapas that project beyond the peripheral walls. They give access to the spacious corridor which is the most impressive of the eighteenth-century extensions (Fig. 78). This completely surrounds the inner two enclosures on four sides, and is exceptional for its great length, some 205 metres on the north and south sides; the receding perspectives of piers give the monument its distinctive architectural character. The supports are raised on



77 Plan, Ramanatha complex, Rameswaram, mostly eighteenth century



78 Outer corridor, Ramanatha complex

moulded basements, their shafts adorned with scrollwork and lotus designs, with prominent lotus brackets on crouching yalis above; painted lotus medallions adorn the ceilings. The colonnade is interrupted on the west by another which proceeds from the outer gopura towards the second enclosure; sculptures here depict Muttu Ramalinga and his ministers. Portraits of other Setupati donors adorn the piers on the east side. There are two principal shrines within the innermost compound; that on the north houses the linga associated with Rama, the other is reserved for Devi. The columned mandapas and pavilion sheltering a large Nandi located to the east of these shrines belong to the same period, as is evident from the portraits of various Setupatis and their families carved on to the columns.

TEMPLES OF THE TRANSITIONAL TAMIL-KERALA ZONE

Control of the southernmost tip of the peninsula was contested by the Nayakas of Madurai and the Venad rulers of Trivandrum, both of whom vied with each other in the sponsorship of building projects. In the Sthanumulaya temple at Suchindram, 6 kilometres from Kanyakumari, there is evidence of mixed sponsorship. Other than the twin linga shrines and Vishnu sanctuary that form the core of the temple, all of which are earlier foundations, the remainder of this somewhat labyrinthine complex dates from the seventeenth



79 View of gopura, Padmanabha complex, Trivandrum, eighteenth century

and early eighteenth centuries. The piers in the Alankara Mandapa have groups of colonettes framing sculptures of the Venad kings, including Martanda Varma; attendant women holding lamps are positioned at the periphery.

The meeting of the Kerala and Tamil idioms sometimes resulted in abrupt architectural juxtapositions. The focal shrine of the Vaikkathappan temple at Vaikom, a town some 40 kilometres south of Cochin, is a traditional exercise in the Kerala style: an elliptical masonry sanctuary with a conical roof and a square wooden mandapa with a pyramidal roof stand in the middle of the inner enclosure. But they are approached through a portico and mandapa with granite columns covered with sculptured figures in the typical, seventeenth-century Tamil manner. There is no attempt here to reconcile the dissimilar styles of the different parts of the temple.

That attempts were made elsewhere to harmonise the Kerala and Tamil traditions is evident in the imposing Padmanabha temple at Trivandrum. This complex was completely renovated by Martanda in the early eighteenth century, and is the largest religious project of the Travancore Rajas. The monument is laid out as a perfect square, with entrances in the middle of each side. The gateway on the east is a squatly proportioned gopura in the late Nayaka manner (Fig. 79). Its pilastered storeys are crowned with a very long

shala roof. Other Tamil features of the temple include the colonnaded corridor that surrounds the innermost enclosure on four sides. Its piers have attached pilasters carved with women holding lamps; lotus and yali brackets are positioned above. Small detached mandapas, each with sixteen columns, are built at the end of each arm of the corridor. Further links with Nayaka practice are obvious in the mandapa that stands immediately outside the eastern doorway to the inner enclosure. The outer piers of this hall have multi-faceted circular shafts with female attendants; the inner piers, which are raised on a second set of basement mouldings, are adorned with sculptures of diverse divinities framed by cutout colonettes.

The Padmanabha sanctuary itself is rectangular in plan, so as to accommodate the reclining form of Vishnu who is viewed through three doorways. This Kerala-styled structure is roofed with tiers of wooden gables covered with copper sheets; paintings in a regional style cover the outside walls. In contrast, the granite piers that surround the sanctuary in quadrangular array are clearly Tamil in style. The Krishna shrine to the north-west of the main sanctuary is set within its own compound walls with timber screens and gabled wooden roofs in the characteristic Kerala manner.

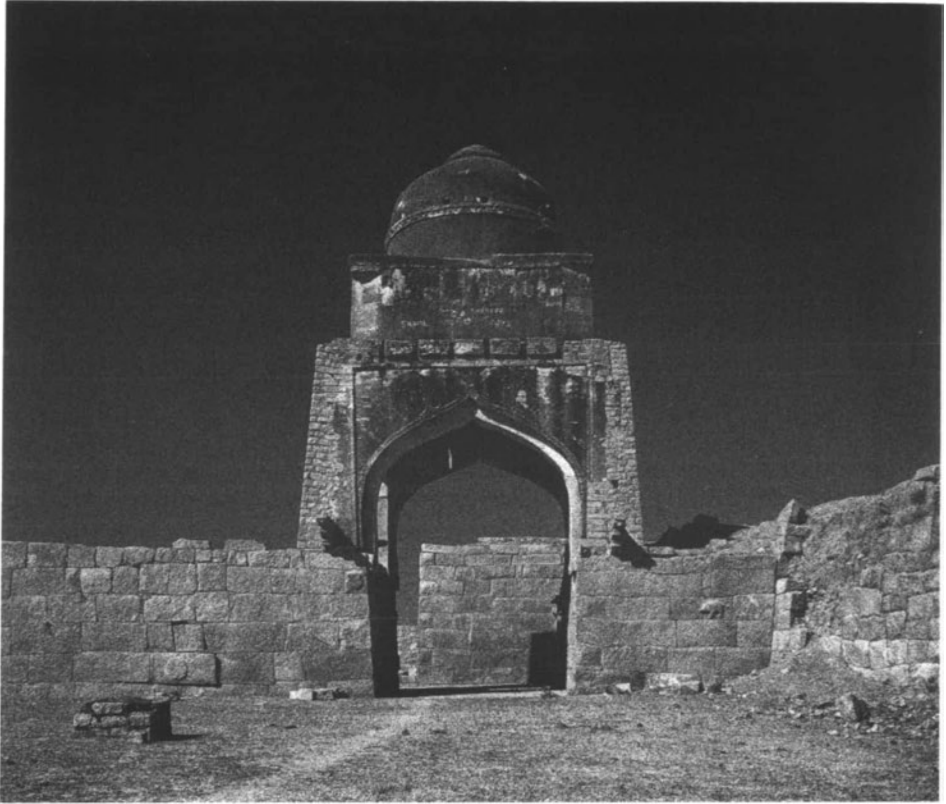
CHAPTER 5

PALACE ARCHITECTURE

Compared with the abundance of temples surviving from the Vijayanagara and Nayaka periods, there is a marked scarcity of royal architecture. This reflects the perishable materials out of which courtly buildings tended to be constructed, as well as the repeated sieges, raids and destructive attacks to which they were subjected over the years. During the centuries under review, most royal monuments experienced a cycle of occupation, devastation and abandonment. This situation continued even into modern times, with the British themselves dismantling the residences of local rulers, as at Srirangapattana. The result is that the only courtly complexes preserved to any extent in Southern India today were either deserted before the Europeans arrived, or were sufficiently distant from cities and towns not to be adversely affected by urban development in subsequent centuries.

Palaces assigned to this era lack any precise historical context. Even when a royal monument is popularly associated with a particular monarch, such as the palace of Tirumala Nayaka at Madurai, there is usually a dearth of supporting documents. This does not negate the very real connection between monarchs and their residences; it merely obscures the actual chronology. Further confusion is caused by the fact that most military and courtly complexes were extended over considerable periods of time, resulting in long and complicated building histories.

Nor is it always possible to understand the precise functions of the different parts of Southern Indian palaces since their halls, apartments and interior courts were all used for business, reception, entertainment or residence, depending on the time of the day or the season. Considerable uncertainty surrounds the interpretation of many royal structures. The Lotus Mahal at Vijayanagara, for example, is sometimes believed to have been used by female members of the court who resided in the vicinity; in reality, it is more likely to have provided a formal setting for the Rayas or their commanders, conveniently close to the stables and parade grounds. Other courtly monuments that present a functional dilemma are the vaulted structures at Gingee which have been identified variously as reception halls, gymnasiums and granaries. The names by which palace buildings have come to be known are of little help in this respect. There is no way of ensuring the authenticity of the various Gagan Mahals and Raja Mahals at royal sites; in any case, such fanciful labels were never intended as functional connotations. Some names, such as the Lotus Mahal already mentioned, derive more from



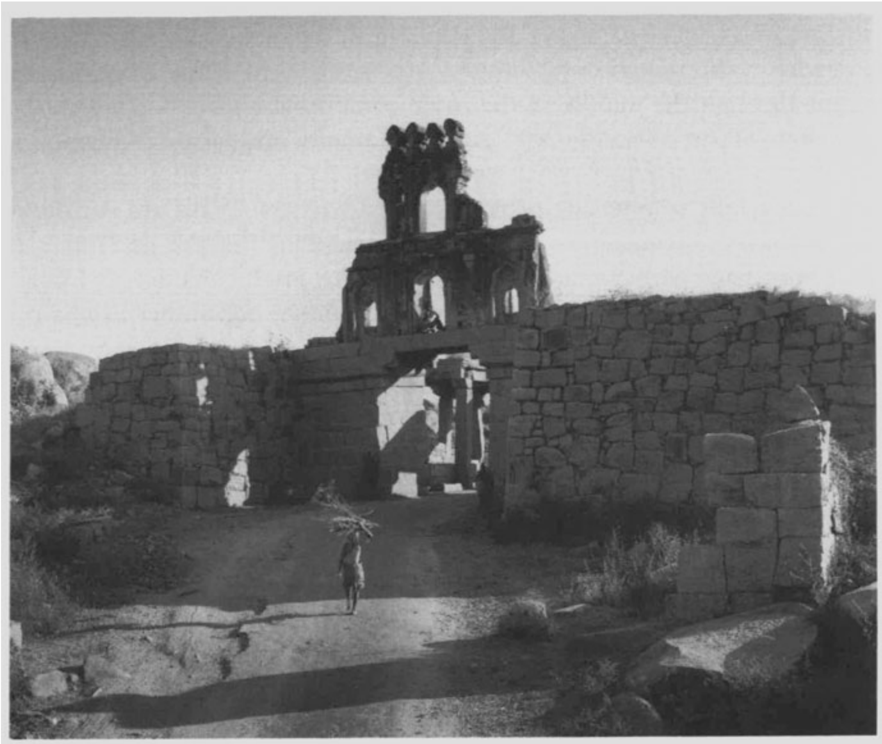
80 Domed gateway, south-east of royal centre, Vijayanagara, fifteenth century

the imagination of nineteenth-century visitors than from contemporary historical sources.

FORTIFIED SETTINGS

Before examining the palaces themselves, it is worth noting that almost all examples are associated with fortified sites. Courtly buildings are usually shielded by massive stone walls, earthen ramparts, moats and elaborate gateways. These defensive works were more substantially built than the palaces themselves, and for this reason are often better preserved. Two broad categories of forts may be distinguished in Southern India during these centuries: hill sites with natural defensive capabilities, and urban sites in plains and valleys.

Governed by their natural environments, the layouts of hill forts are invariably irregular. Massive walls at the Vijayanagara capital run along the



81 Gateway north-east of royal centre, fifteenth century

tops of granite ridges and across valleys at the shortest possible points to create an uneven oval configuration, some 4 kilometres along its greatest axis (see Fig. 1). This fortified zone contains the enclosures of the royal centre, themselves protected by an additional ring of walls, about 1 kilometre across. Fragments of fortifications in the outlying quarters of the city suggest a concentric arrangement of multiple arcs of reinforcements.

Vijayanagara's walls have slightly angled profiles; they are constructed of granite blocks with earth and rubble infill. Regularly spaced square or rectangular bastions are duplicated at gateways. These entrances are further protected by lookout posts and barbican enclosures; passageways are roofed with lintels carried on decorated brackets. A gateway south-east of the royal centre has a large dome raised high on four pointed arches (Fig. 80). Another example north-east of the royal centre has an upper façade with arched openings and a parapet of merlons (Fig. 81). These domed and arched features derive from the Bahmani architecture of the Deccan (see below).

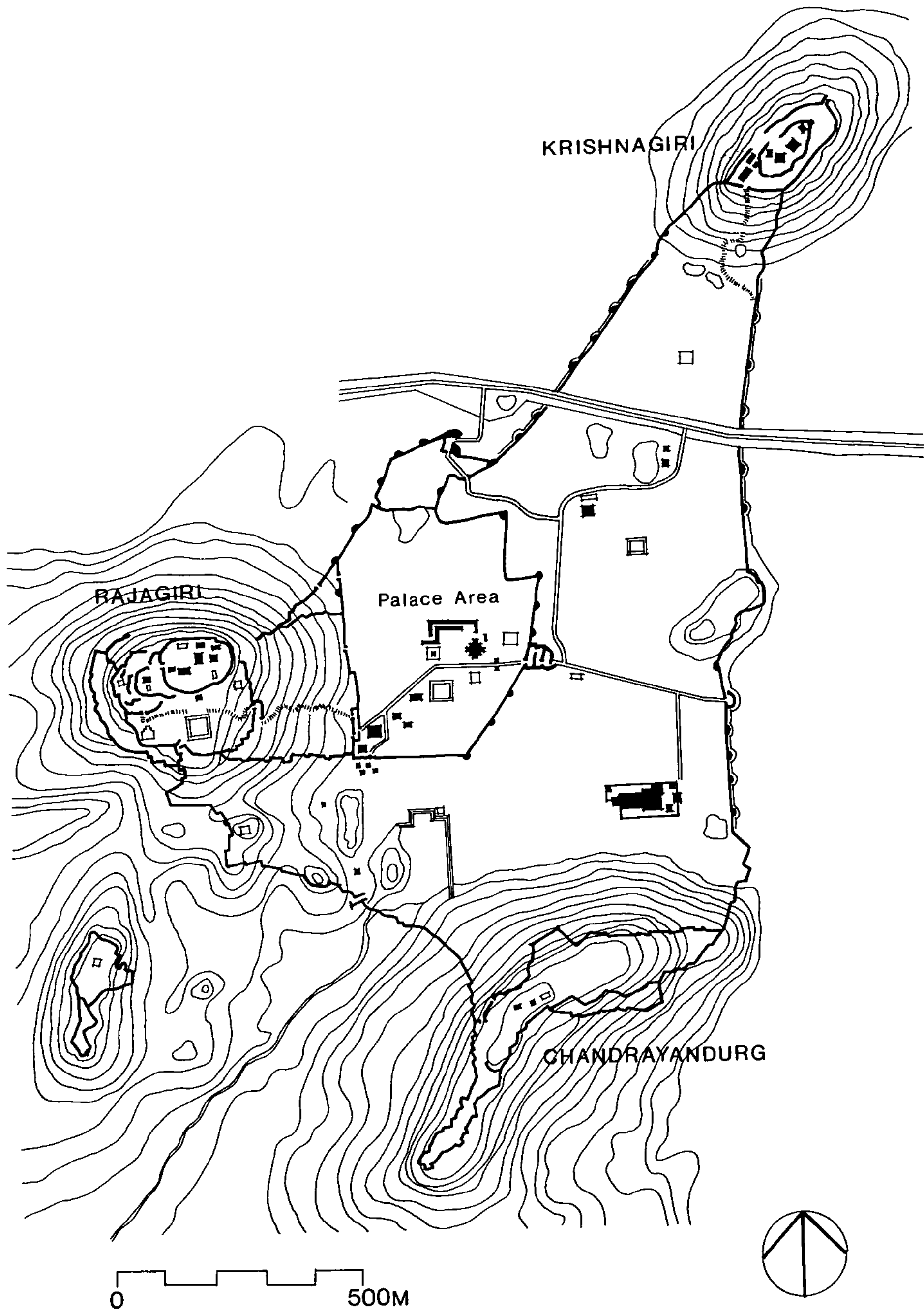
Though Vijayanagara was by far the largest and most elaborate citadel in Southern India during this era, it is by no means unique. The hill fort at Chitradurga preserves a series of massively constructed gateways, many with

bent passageways. The gateways at Chandragiri, the most important Vijayanagara citadel in the seventeenth century, are arranged in a line along the road that runs through the middle of the royal compounds; several gateways have yali sculptures on the columns. At Chandragiri and also at Penukonda, fortified zones of approximately quadrilateral shape contain courtly monuments; rocky hills to one side provide natural barriers. Walls are surrounded by broad moats, spanned by bridges to reach the principal gateways. The fortifications have part-circular bastions, box-like machicolations and lines of battlements. These defensive elements were unknown in Southern India prior to the sixteenth century.

Gingee, the most strategically situated of all citadels in the Tamil zone, was occupied successively by the Nayakas, Adil Shahis, Marathas, French and British. The site presents an impregnable spectacle of three independent rock forts, each with granite walls encircling a natural outcrop (Fig. 82). Among the diverse structures perched on the summits of these triple forts are granaries, watchtowers and shrines. Substantial walls with part-circular bastions and broad moats run across the level ground between the forts to enclose a vast triangular area, no less than 1 kilometre on each side (Fig. 83). Additional walls define a central zone which functioned as a royal enclosure, inside which is an ensemble of palace buildings and storage structures. Gateways leading into this enclosure on the east and north are approached through curving barbican walls that project beyond the line of fortifications.

Cities in densely populated zones assumed quite different configurations during these centuries; most were laid out according to regular square plans, with gateways in the middle of each side. The fortifications of Vellore define an irregular rectangle, more than 400 metres from north to south (Fig. 84). The walls are doubled all around, and are protected by a broad moat bridged by a causeway on the east; similar causeways on the south and west were demolished in the eighteenth century. The fortifications are reinforced with part-circular bastions and lines of battlements (Fig. 85); box-like machicolations, the most elaborate in Southern India, project outwards over the water. Nothing is now visible of the palace buildings that once occupied the middle of the fort.

Madurai was also laid out on a square. Eighteenth-century maps of the city indicate a fortified zone, somewhat more than 1 kilometre across, with single or double gateways in the middle of each side. The Minakshi-Sundareshvara temple served as the focal point of this configuration, with the palace located a short distance to the south-east, in its own royal quarter (see Fig. 109). Palamkottai, twin city of Tirunelveli, was the most important stronghold on the Tambarapani. The city walls formed an almost perfect square about 750 metres long on each side. Gateways positioned in the middle of each side protruded outwards into the moat. (As at Madurai, the walls of Palamkottai



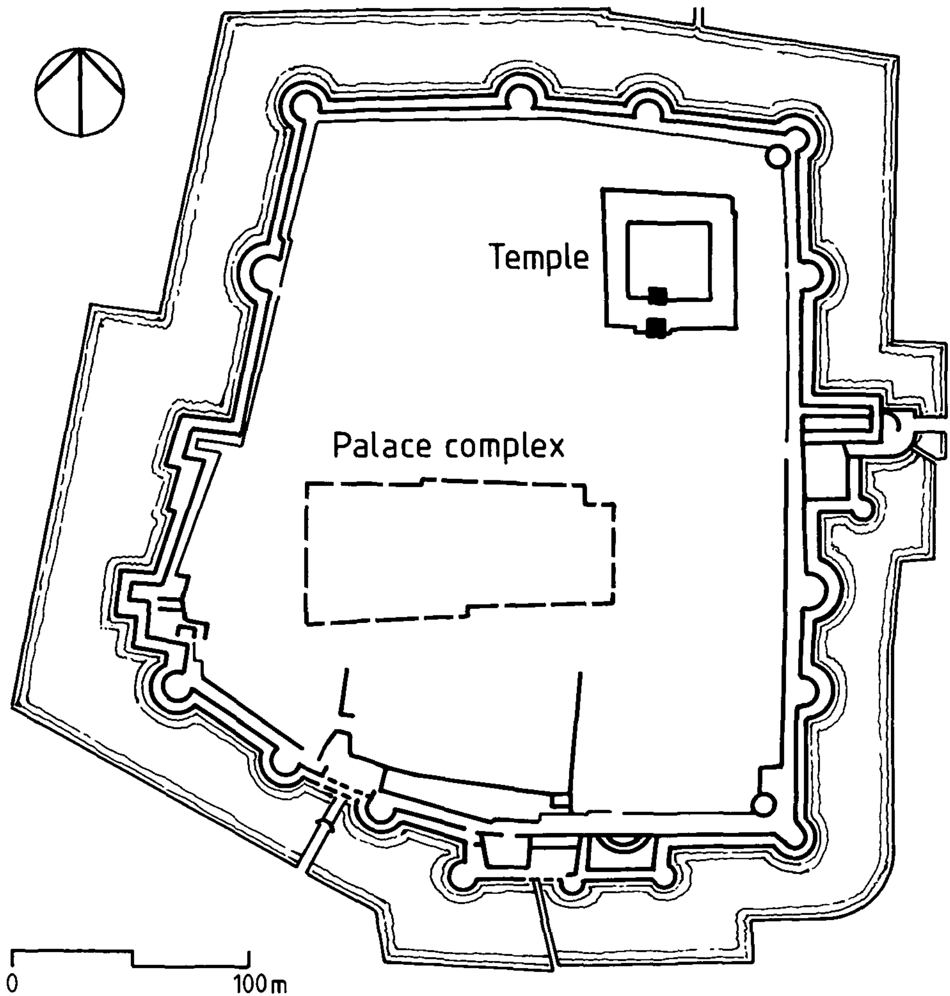
82 Plan of Gingee



83 Walls and moat, Gingee, sixteenth century

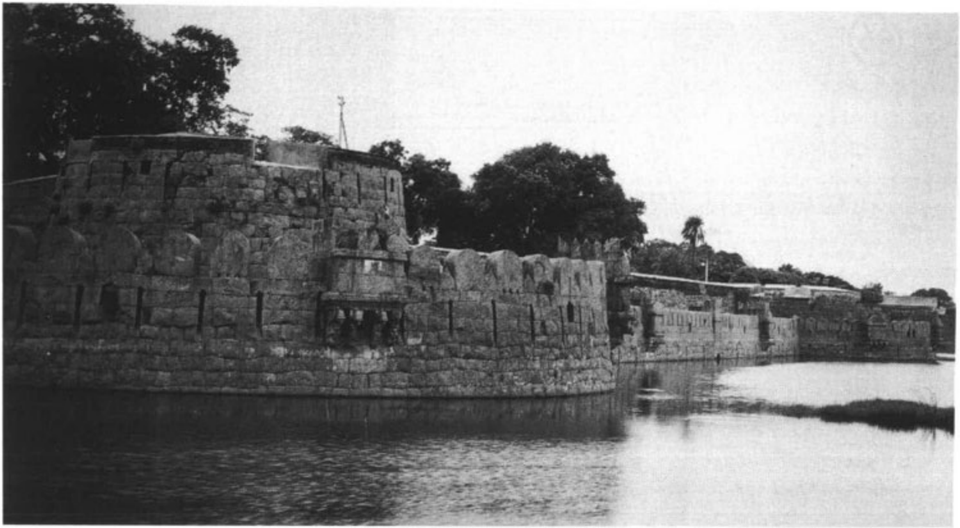
were demolished by the British towards the end of the eighteenth century.) A similar, though less regular version of this scheme seems to have been adopted by the Wodeyars for their fort at Mysore. Remnants of the original walls indicate a square zone with regularly spaced square bastions; the site of the original palace coincides with that of the much later princely residence. Square plans were also adopted by local governors and chiefs, as is evident at Barkur in the Kanara district. From what can be made out of the collapsing ramparts of this dilapidated fort, the walls delimit a square compound with a single entrance on the east. Mounds of rubble inside mark the locations of buried buildings.

The layouts of fortified urban centres in Southern India during this era were



84 Plan of Vellore

by no means restricted to square models; circular plans were also known. Though virtually nothing can now be seen of the fortifications of the Nayaka city of Thanjavur, the eighteenth-century maps clearly show defensive works following a circle about 1 kilometre in diameter, with the palace located approximately in the middle. The rectangular extension to the south accommodated the Brihadishvara temple, the Chola-period complex that was much extended under the Nayakas. Tiruchirapalli, another of the great Nayaka forts, also had a circular plan, with a ring of walls girding the great rock that overlooks the Kaveri. Nothing now remains of the palace built inside the walls, though the temple on the flank of the rock presents a strongly



85 Bastions and moat, Vellore, sixteenth century

fortified exterior. A further example of a circular city is that of Bangalore. According to the old maps, the principal fort of the Gowdas was contained within an ellipse of masonry walls surrounded by a broad moat. The royal temple of the Gowdas still stands, but the defensive walls and palace were dismantled long ago.

STYLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

Two completely different building traditions may be distinguished in the palace architecture of this period. The first appears to be connected with a much earlier legacy. Evidence for this indigenous heritage is provided by the structures recently exposed by archaeologists in the royal centre at Vijayanagara (Fig. 86). They appear to have been built in a combination of permanent and ephemeral materials: granite blocks laid without any mortar for foundations and footings, plaster for floors, rubble and brickwork for walls, timber for supporting columns, tiles for roofs. The destruction of the site and its subsequent abandonment, as well as the corrosive effects of more than four hundred years of rain and sun have meant that only the masonry portions of these buildings can now be seen. They indicate halls on square or rectangular plans with evenly spaced columns, and residences with ascending sequences of floor levels arranged in U-shaped formations. These residences generally have one or more small chambers at the topmost levels, sometimes linked by narrow corridors. It is likely that these courtly structures were provided with columned verandahs and porches, infill walls with pilasters and narrow



86 Excavated structures, royal centre, Vijayanagara, fifteenth–sixteenth centuries

doorways; they may also have had upper storeys capped with pyramidal towers. The reports of foreign visitors attest to the sumptuous decoration of the Vijayanagara palaces. Unfortunately, no traces have been discovered of the semi-precious stones and ivory panels that were inset into walls and columns, or of the gleaming metal sheets that cloaked cornices and finials.

That a second, quite separate tradition of royal architecture existed in Southern India at the same time is demonstrated by a related group of standing structures in the royal centre at Vijayanagara. They are built of crudely cut stone blocks set in thick mortar and cloaked with plaster, a solid masonry technique that explains their comparatively complete preservation. The Lotus Mahal, already mentioned, is one of the best-preserved examples (Fig. 87). Like other nearby buildings it makes use of arches, often with cusps, to frame doorways, windows and wall niches, and to act as supports for domes and vaults of different designs. Decoration incised into plaster walls and ceilings displays geometric and stylised foliate patterns (Fig. 88). All of these techniques, forms and motifs are clearly borrowed from the courtly and religious architecture of the Bahmani kingdom of the Deccan, being unknown in Southern India prior to the Vijayanagara period.

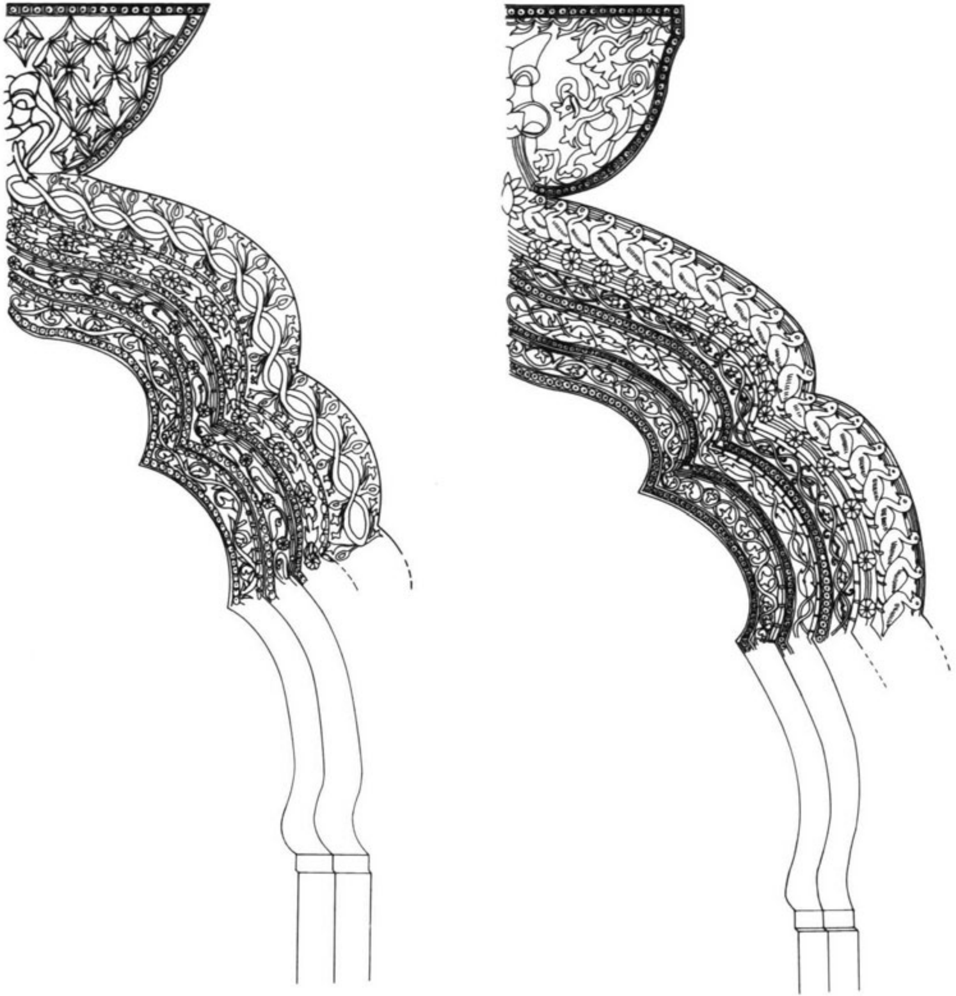
If the style of some courtly buildings is clearly dependent on Deccan traditions, it should not be assumed that Vijayanagara palaces simply imitated



87 Lotus Mahal, royal centre, Vijayanagara, sixteenth century

Bahmani practice. On the contrary, the Vijayanagara palaces incorporate many non-Bahmani elements, such as double-curved eaves, pyramidal towers with ribbed finials and fully modelled plaster sculptures familiar from temple architecture. This blend of Deccan and Southern Indian features results in an entirely novel synthesis which may be interpreted as one of the major innovations of the era. That this architectural idiom was closely identified with the Rayas themselves is shown by the fact that this Bahmani-influenced idiom is restricted to royal sites like Vijayanagara, Penukonda and Chandragiri. Even though the residences of the later Rayas exceed earlier examples in scale and formality of planning, they conform closely to the original style as first enunciated at the Vijayanagara capital.

Later palace architecture in Southern India, especially that of the Nayakas in the Tamil zone, develops the tradition first articulated under the Rayas. There is an overall tendency to increase the scale and ornamentation of courtly buildings, and to combine diverse architectural elements into formal and symmetrical compositions. The complex at Madurai, which preserves only a fragment of what must have been the greatest of all seventeenth-century royal residences, is conceived as an immense complex, with different halls and inner



88 Details of plaster decoration, Lotus Mahal

courts connected by colonnades and corridors. In general, Nayaka palaces are focused on sequences of internal spaces articulated by rows of massive columns and roofed by lofty domes and vaults (Fig. 89). This contrasts markedly with Vijayanagara complexes in which separate and individually designed buildings stand freely within discrete walled compounds.

Not all aspects of Southern Indian royal architecture, however, have their origins in Vijayanagara and Bahmani practice; there seems also to have been an interaction with vernacular traditions. A distinguishing characteristic of Nayaka palaces in the Tamil zone, as at Thanjavur and Madurai, are the columns with cylindrical shafts. These columns have no precedent in earlier



89 Interior of audience hall, palace, Madurai, seventeenth century

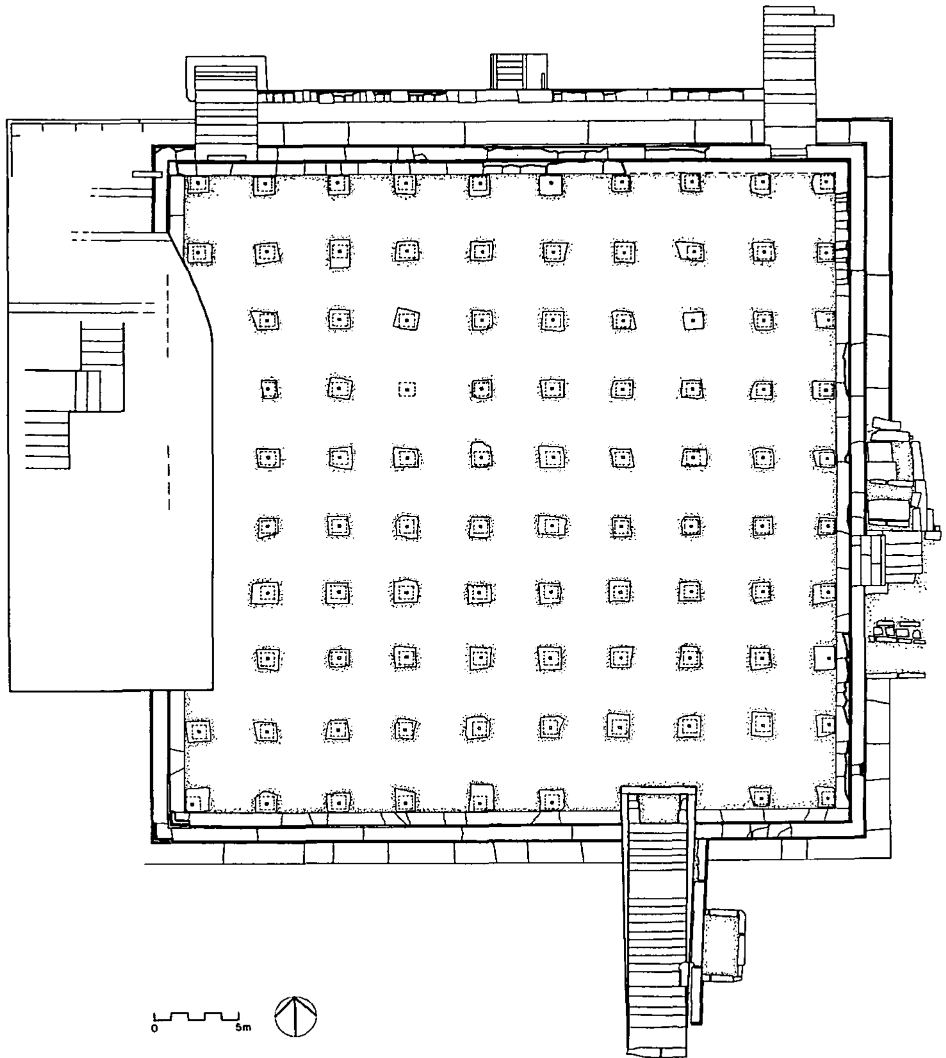
masonry architecture of the region, but are familiar in domestic timber architecture from which they appear to have been borrowed. Timber was much used throughout the region for grand mansions, no doubt also for the residences of nobles, governors and chiefs. (It is to be admitted that knowledge about such architecture is mostly restricted to recent practice, all examples from the Nayaka period having vanished.)

Vernacular timber traditions seem also to have influenced royal architecture in the Kannada zone. The palaces of the later rulers at Shimoga and Bangalore, for instance, are characterised by ceremonial audience halls with double-height timber columns, arches with cusped profiles, also in wood, and sloping tiled roofs. A comparison of these eighteenth-century buildings with domestic architecture in the region, such as that which still survives in the forested regions, reveals a striking correspondence in the use of timber supports and tiled roofs, as well as in the carved details of wooden doorways and brackets.

THE ROYAL CENTRE AT VIJAYANAGARA

Courtly structures at Vijayanagara provide the best possible introduction to palace architecture in Southern India in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The royal centre at this site is divided by tapering granite walls into a number of irregular interlocking enclosures. They are approached through complicated sequences of gateways, and are occasionally linked by small doorways. The Rama temple that stands in the middle of the enclosures has already been noted (see Fig. 8). It provides a symbolic and spatial node around which most of the courtly structures are arranged, and towards which many of the roads in this part of the city were once directed. Enclosures east of the temple appear to have been associated with the public and ceremonial life of the court; those to the west accommodated the more private activities linked with the king's own household. Structures inside these enclosures include audience halls, ceremonial platforms, residences, pleasure pavilions, stables and stores. Some of these exhibit features closely related to the early Bahmani style, suggesting a Sangama date; others were renovated several times, and may even have been reused when the site was temporarily occupied by the Rayas for a short time after the sack of the city in 1565.

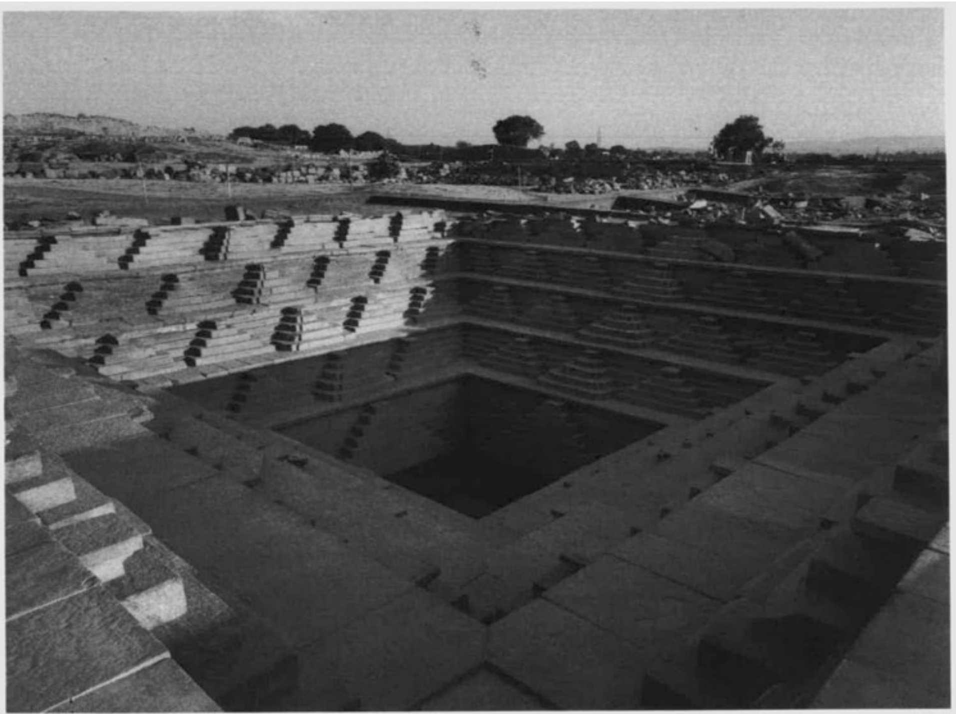
The earliest structures in the royal centre at Vijayanagara may be those built in an indigenous architectural style. Among these is the hundred-columned hall situated in one corner of an enclosure directly south of the Rama temple. The foundations of this hall define a floor area more than 40 metres square, with ten rows of ten column footings, probably intended to support timber posts (Fig. 90). (No traces of these wooden columns have been found.) Steps with stone balustrades provide access from three sides; a longer flight of steps, clearly a later addition, ascends to an upper storey that is no longer extant,



90 Plan of hundred-columned hall, royal centre, Vijayanagara, fourteenth century

presumably in timber. A pile of rubble on the west side of the hall includes the outlines of a raised chamber, perhaps the seat of the Raya or his representative. If this monument is the same as the hundred-columned structure noted by Abdul Razzaq, then it is the earliest audience hall for which architectural evidence exists in a Southern India palace.

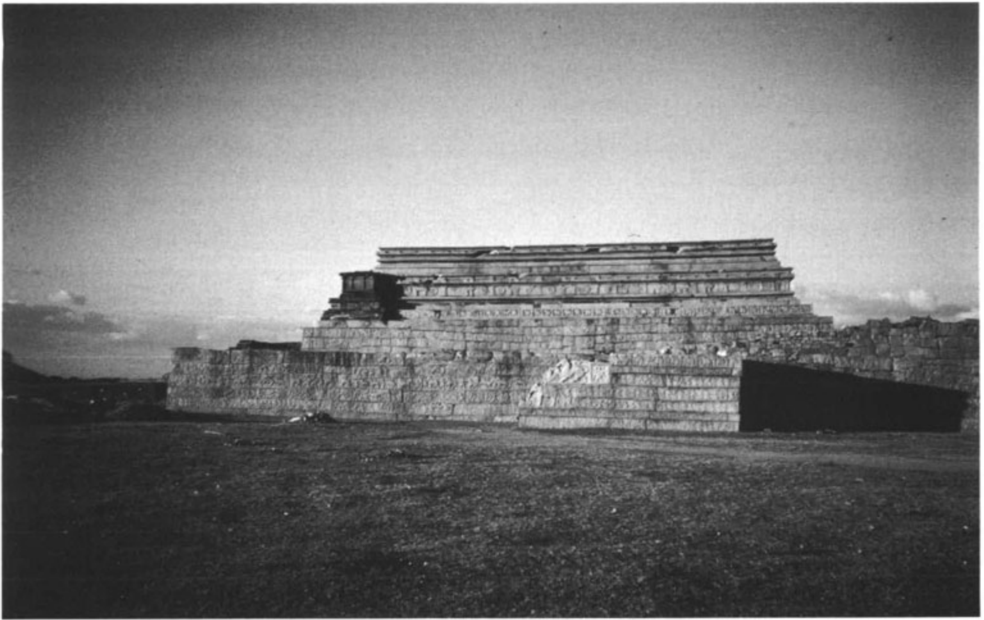
Several smaller columned structures within the same enclosure cluster around the hundred-columned hall. They are built close together, sometimes



91 Stepped tank, royal centre, Vijayanagara

one upon the other at different levels, thereby suggesting successive phases of occupation; courts and corridors fill the intermediate spaces. Further south and east, though still within the same enclosure, are two large ceremonial tanks. One is unusually large, being 67 metres long and 22 metres broad; the other is faced entirely in green schist, and is surrounded by steps and landings (Fig. 91). Numbers and directions inscribed on to each block suggest that the stones were fashioned at another site before being transported and assembled at the capital. Water was supplied to these two reservoirs as well as to smaller ponds by means of a complex system of aqueducts and water channels. Portions of this system are still in evidence.

The multi-storeyed platform built up and over a rocky outcrop at the north-east corner of the enclosure dominates the whole of the royal centre at Vijayanagara. This unique monument consists of three diminishing stages, each a solid square with slightly sloping granite walls (Fig. 92). The blocks are covered with shallow carvings in a vigorous style that illustrate a wide variety of regal topics (see Fig. 121). Stairs on three sides ascend to the uppermost level of the platform, now devoid of any structures. Schist slabs, obviously later additions, cloak the western face of the platform. The intricacy of the mouldings and niches here recalls sixteenth-century temple architecture; the

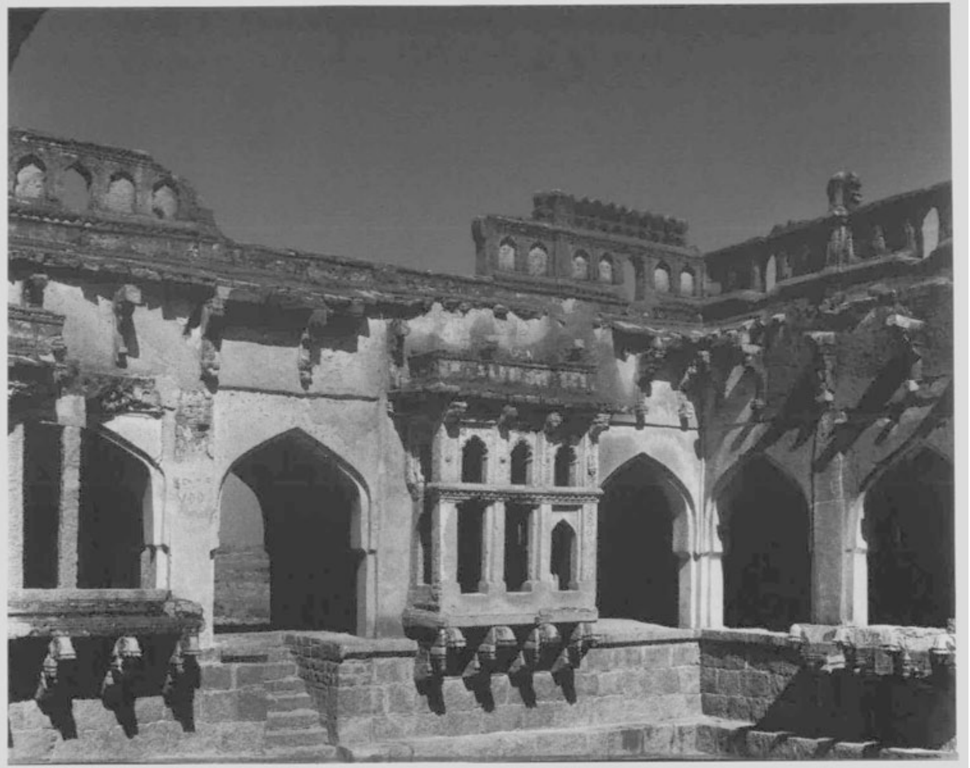


92 Multi-storeyed platform, royal centre, Vijayanagara, fourteenth–sixteenth centuries

carvings of courtly figures and royal animals are similarly sixteenth-century in style and subject.

The multi-storeyed platform is generally associated with the great Mahanavami festival that took place at the capital. Many of the features of this monument correspond with the House of Victory as described by Domingo Paes. According to this observer, Krishnaraya erected a ceremonial platform to commemorate the success of his Kalinga campaign. (The schist slabs on the western side may indeed be an extension of this period, but the remainder of the monument is clearly much earlier.) Paes notes that the House of Victory was built entirely of stone, with carvings on the sides. During the Mahanavami, a shrine was erected at the top where the emperor worshipped; priests performed animal sacrifices in front. Krishnaraya sat on a throne in the vicinity of the platform, where he received homage from the governors and chief officers of the realm, and from where he reviewed processions of elephants, horses and female servants. Here, too, he may have enjoyed performances of music and dance, mock battles, wrestling matches and brilliant displays of fireworks.

Immediately outside the enclosure containing the hundred-columned hall and Mahanavami platform, near to its south-east corner, stands a bathing pavilion of obvious Bahmani inspiration. Known as the Queen's Bath, this building consists of an arcaded corridor arranged on four sides of a square



93 Interior of Queen's Bath, royal centre, Vijayanagara, sixteenth century

water basin; balconies with fanciful arched openings project over the water (Fig. 93). Domes and vaults of various designs, many with their original decoration intact, roof the corridor. The exterior is plain, the eaves on corbelled brackets having been removed; the two towers that once rose above the roof, recorded in nineteenth-century photographs, have also been dismantled. A small moat surrounds the pavilion, with a chute for transporting water into the central basin. The remains of an aqueduct nearby indicate an elaborate hydraulic scheme.

The Lotus Mahal that stands in the middle of the enclosure in the north-east quadrant of Vijayanagara's royal centre is one of the best-preserved palace buildings at the capital (Figs. 87 and 88). This two-storeyed pavilion is laid out on an elaborate plan with double projections in the middle of each side; a staircase block is added to the north-west corner. Piers with cusped arches supporting vaults on both levels are overhung by double-curved eaves. The exterior was once encrusted with plaster friezes of birds, stalks and petals, roundels with stylised ornament and fully modelled yalis, traces of which are



94 Rectangular pavilion with gabled vault, royal centre, Vijayanagara, sixteenth century

still evident. The upper parts of the pavilion consist of a symmetrical arrangement of nine towers, each a multi-tiered pyramid with a ribbed finial. The tower over the central bay rises higher to crown the whole composition.

West of the Lotus Mahal, within the same enclosure, are the remains of a courtly residence. Its stepped floor levels and inner chambers are raised on basement mouldings set in the middle of a small pond where they are reached by an access bridge. To the north is a much larger residence of the same type, with triple tiers of basement mouldings projecting outwards on each side. They are decorated with carvings of animals and birds, and there are even hints of painted floral designs. The outlines of four chambers can be made out on the upper floor, but the earth and rubble walls were cleaned away long ago.

The adjacent structure in the north-west corner of the Lotus Mahal enclosure has been identified diversely as a guard's quarter, treasury, gymnasium or armoury (Fig. 94). This long rectangular structure has a single entrance in the middle of the east side. The interior consists of an open hall at ground level surrounded by an elevated arcade. The steep pyramidal vault that roofs the interior is partly concealed on the outside by a pierced parapet of interlocking merlon motifs. All of these monuments are overlooked by watchtowers set into the surrounding enclosure walls. They have balconies at the uppermost levels carried on ornamented brackets from which to survey the approach roads. The octagonal example preserves a fanciful pyramidal roof capped by a ribbed finial.

A related group of palace buildings situated just beyond the Lotus Mahal enclosure to the east includes the celebrated elephant stables, the grandest of all courtly structures at Vijayanagara (Fig. 95). The stables consist of a long line of

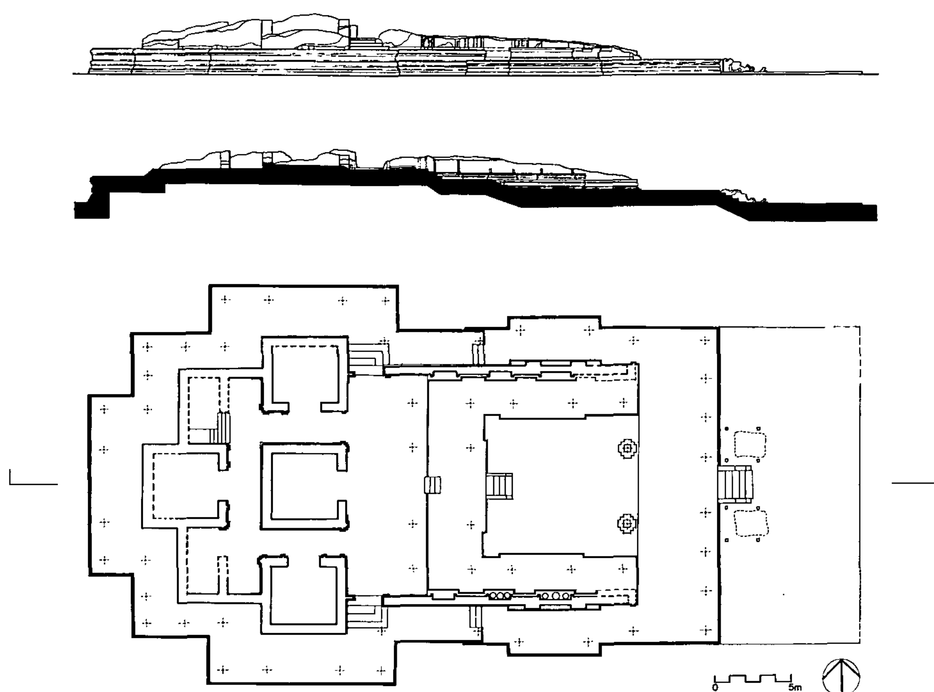


95 Elephant stables, royal centre, Vijayanagara, fifteenth–sixteenth centuries

eleven vaulted chambers, each of which could have accommodated one or two animals, facing the spacious parade grounds to the west. The arched entrances to the chambers and the flattish domes above are Bahmani in style, but the twelve-sided vaults with ribbed finials with which the domes alternate are original devices. Both domes and vaults are arranged symmetrically on either side of an upper chamber that may have been reserved for drummers and musicians. The ceilings of the stables demonstrate considerable ingenuity in the use of domes with lotus petals, curving square vaults with ribbed sides and three-dimensional parapets with miniature towered forms.

The parade grounds on to which the stables open are bounded on the north by a long structure that may have been used for martial sports. Its interior court at ground level could have served as a suitable venue for matches and fights, while the raised verandah on the south surveying the parade grounds could have functioned as a reviewing stand. Steeply cusped arches of the verandah rise above stone blocks projecting from the columns. These blocks once carried stone frames that repeated the profiles of the arches, but which were separated from them by a small gap; they have now vanished.

Excavations within the enclosures in the western half of the royal centre at Vijayanagara have exposed the foundations of numerous residential structures, some clustered together in a dense zone which the archaeologists have designated as the noblemen's quarter (Figs. 96 and 97). (This identification remains tentative since no evidence has been discovered to suggest the identity of the inhabitants.) Each of the residences here is raised on a stone basement that defines a sequence of three ascending levels of mouldings. They are

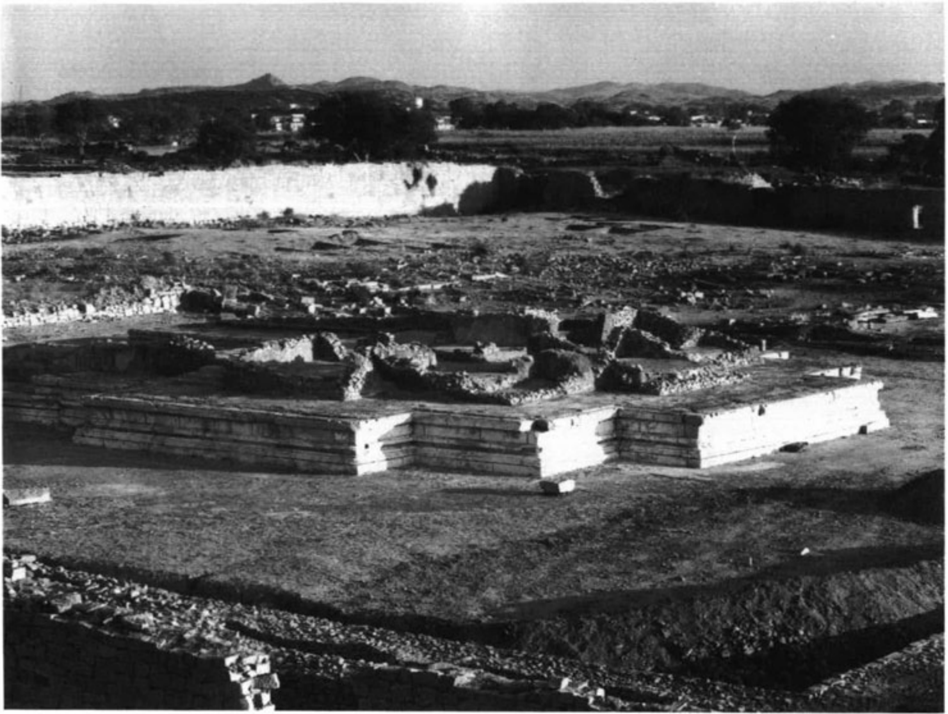


96 Plan, section and elevation of excavated residence, royal centre, Vijayanagara, fifteenth–sixteenth centuries

symmetrically arranged around an open court, often in U-shaped formation. Small chambers surrounded by columned verandahs are situated on top.

Among the courtly features located nearby is an octagonal pavilion with two chambers, one above the other, connected by a crudely constructed staircase tower. Walls and brackets are ornamented with foliate and bird motifs in delicately worked plaster; the roof is an octagonal pyramid with a ribbed finial. The adjacent nine-domed reception hall is enclosed on three sides, but open to the north. Its interior is relieved by pointed arches and shallow domes with petalled motifs and central lotuses. A multi-domed watchtower is elevated on the walls at the north-west corner of the adjacent enclosure. Only three of the flattish domes that roof its six upper chambers are intact.

A short distance to the south of the octagonal pavilion and nine-domed hall is a small water structure. This is laid out on an irregular octagonal plan with an arcade surrounding a central chamber. The stone cistern in the middle appears to have been fed by a complex water supply system employing terracotta pipes, broken pieces of which have been discovered in the vicinity.

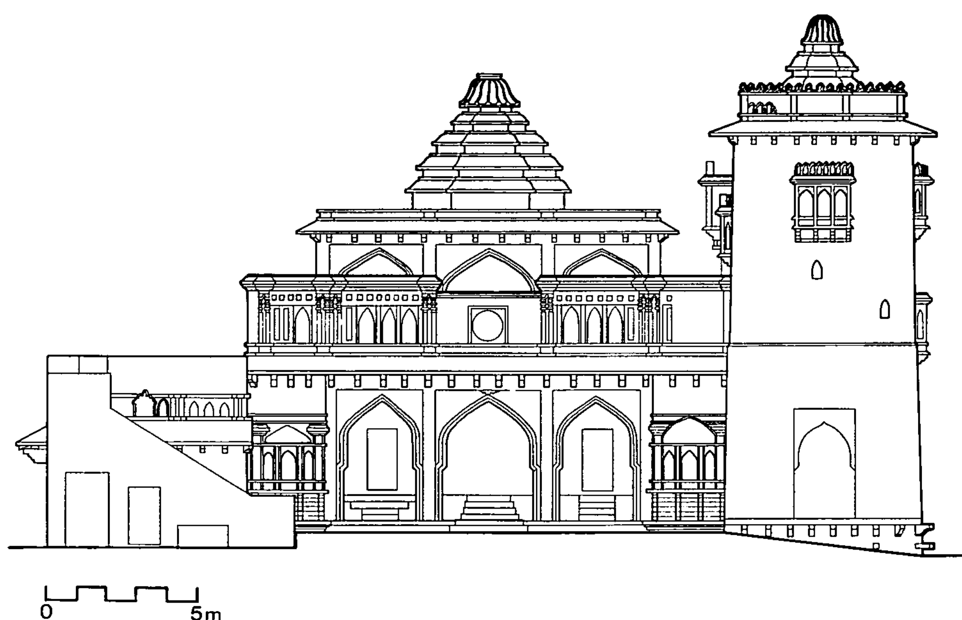


97 Excavated residence

PALACES OF THE LATER RAYAS

Important examples of Vijayanagara palace architecture survive from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Penukonda has two courtly monuments of interest, possibly dating from the period of Shrirangadeva Raya I, the most important of the Aravidus who occupied this site. The Gagan Mahal is an east-facing building composed of two storeys of arcaded chambers, with a double-height chamber at the upper level (Fig. 98). This is marked by an octagonal, multi-tiered tower with a pyramidal profile and a capping ribbed finial. A staircase tower abuts the building to the north; its sloping sides are interrupted by projecting balconies with miniature arched windows and merlon parapets. A small chamber at the summit of the tower is topped with a pyramidal roof, reproducing at a smaller scale that of the upper chamber of the main building.

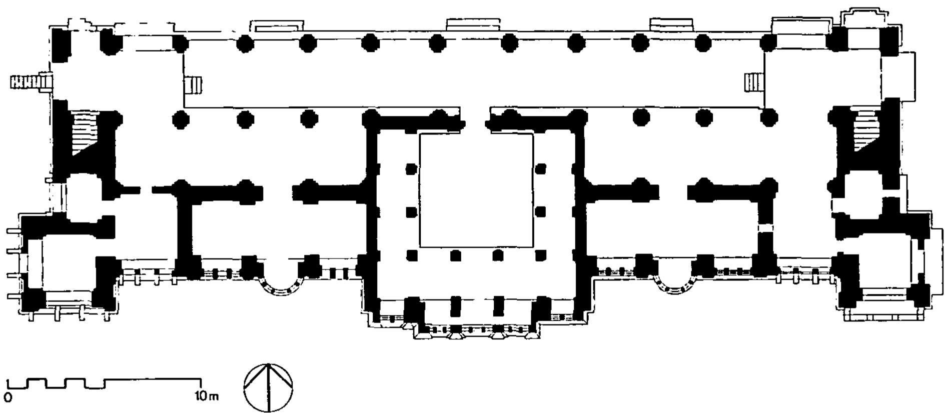
A short distance to the east of the Gagan Mahal stands a small detached pavilion (Fig. 99). Its sloping side walls, double-curved eaves, pierced parapet of interlocking merlons and capping octagonal tower exactly resemble those of the Gagan Mahal. The interior plasterwork is remarkably complete, revealing



98 Elevation of Gagan Mahal, Penukonda, sixteenth century



99 Pavilion, Penukonda, sixteenth century



100 Plan of ground level, Raja Mahal, Chandragiri, seventeenth century

the intricate geometric and foliate patterns with which these structures were once embellished.

Chandragiri's courtly buildings are sometimes associated with the reign of Venkatapatideva I, last of the truly powerful Rayas. The Rana Mahal, which faces east, is a two-storeyed building which partly functions as a ceremonial entrance, giving access to an inner court. The lower level of the structure consists of a passageway with two turns passing through a vaulted chamber; the upper level has a large reception hall opening off an arcaded corridor, with staircases at either end. An octagonal tower of the type already noted at Penukonda rises above the hall; identical but smaller towers crown the staircases. The east façade is of interest for the thick plaster decoration, much of which appears to be original. The arched openings are lined with a broad range of motifs, including foliate emblems, such as buds, leaves and scrollwork, and friezes of geese and yalis. Fully modelled animals lean outwards on either side of the openings, while the spandrels above the arches are filled with stylised lotuses and arabesques in medallions, sometimes with fish-like supports in shallow relief. The arched openings and recesses of the upper level are occasionally subdivided into smaller elements. Archaeological investigations to the north of the Rana Mahal have revealed the foundations of a royal residence similar to those excavated at Vijayanagara. It too has ascending levels, with moulded basements arranged in U-formation and a small chamber at the top.

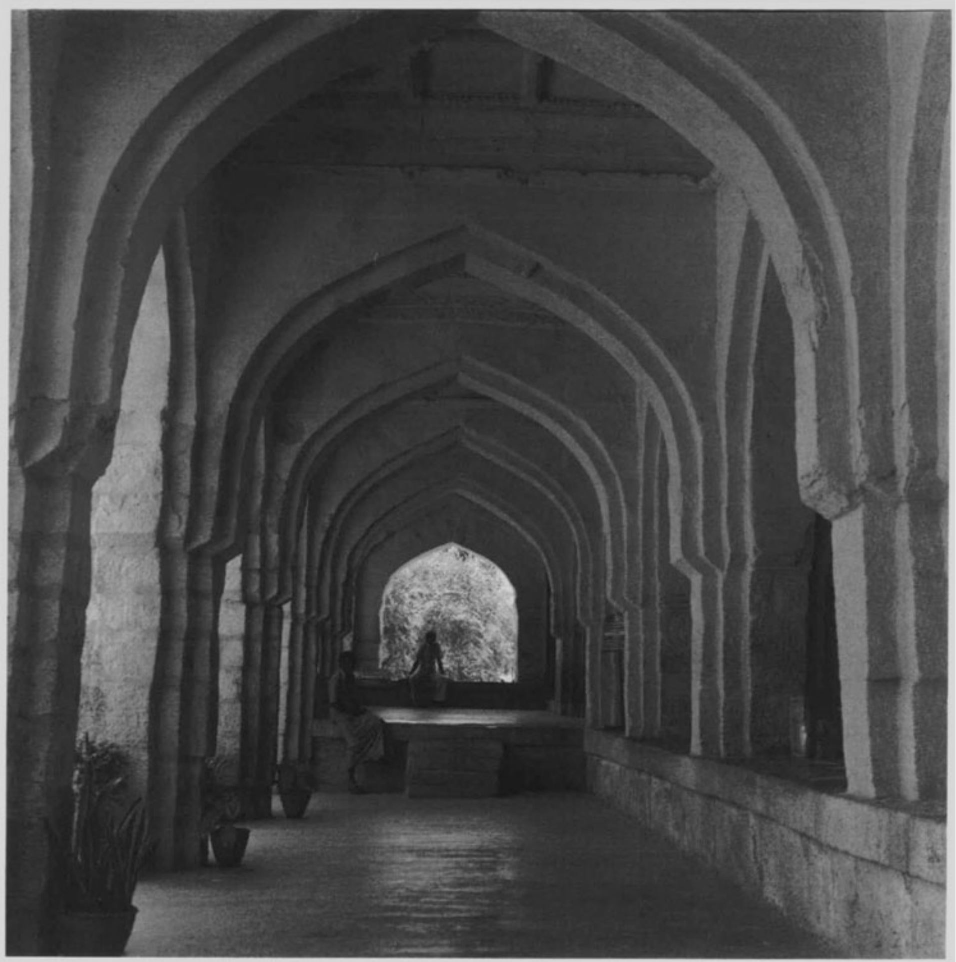
The Raja Mahal at Chandragiri, the larger and longer of the two courtly buildings at this site, faces north towards the fortified hill (Figs. 100 and 101). It represents the climax of the development of Vijayanagara palace architecture, since all of the elements present in earlier buildings are here harmonised



101 Raja Mahal, Chandragiri

into an impressive and symmetrical design that achieves true monumentality. The majestic exterior has tiers of arcaded openings and projecting balconies connected by long cornices and elevated walkways. In the middle of the roof is a square chamber with a large pyramidal tower, possibly a pleasure pavilion, that serves as a climax for the whole composition. Similar but smaller towers are positioned over the staircase blocks at either end of the building. The interior of the Raja Mahal consists of three storeys of arcaded corridors with vaulted bays (Fig. 102). At the core is a double-height audience hall overlooked by arcades at the upper level. Wall surfaces inside and out are missing their original plaster decoration, though there are meagre indications of yali brackets and lotus medallions.

Among the isolated examples of later Vijayanagara palaces dating from the second half of the seventeenth century are several structures at Anegondi. This settlement continued to flourish after the abandonment of the capital, and is still the seat of a local ruler. The Gagan Mahal, which surveys the town square, functions today as a municipal office (Fig. 103). The palace consists of a long row of arcaded chambers on two levels, with balconies on the upper level projecting over the lower arcades. The façade is topped with three towers of the familiar pyramidal type with capping finials. An octagonal staircase tower abuts the building at its southern end.

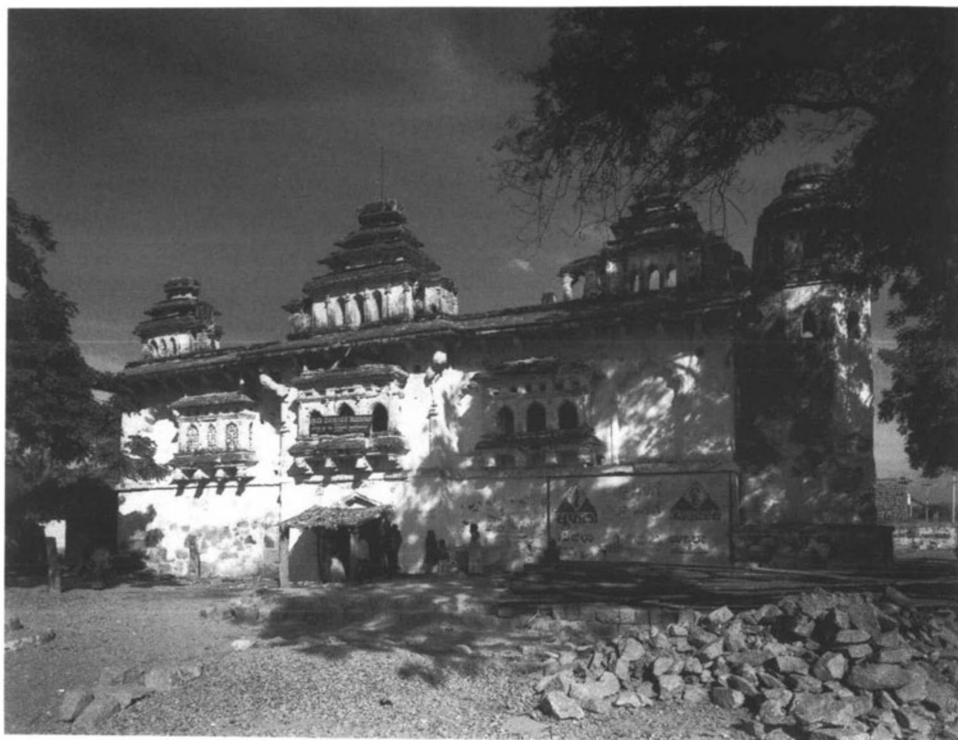


102 Interior arcade, Raja Mahal

PALACES OF THE NAYAKAS

The royal residences of the Nayakas survive in varying states of completion at their capitals in the Tamil and Kannada zones. The royal complex at Gingee, though abandoned long ago, is one of the most complete (Fig. 104). The complex is dominated by the Kalyana Mahal, with apartments on four sides of a square water basin. On the north side of the building rises a square five-storeyed tower with arcades on four sides (Fig. 105). At the top is a small chamber with a steeply pyramidal roof; its hollow interior is adorned with projecting corbels and a capping lotus panel.

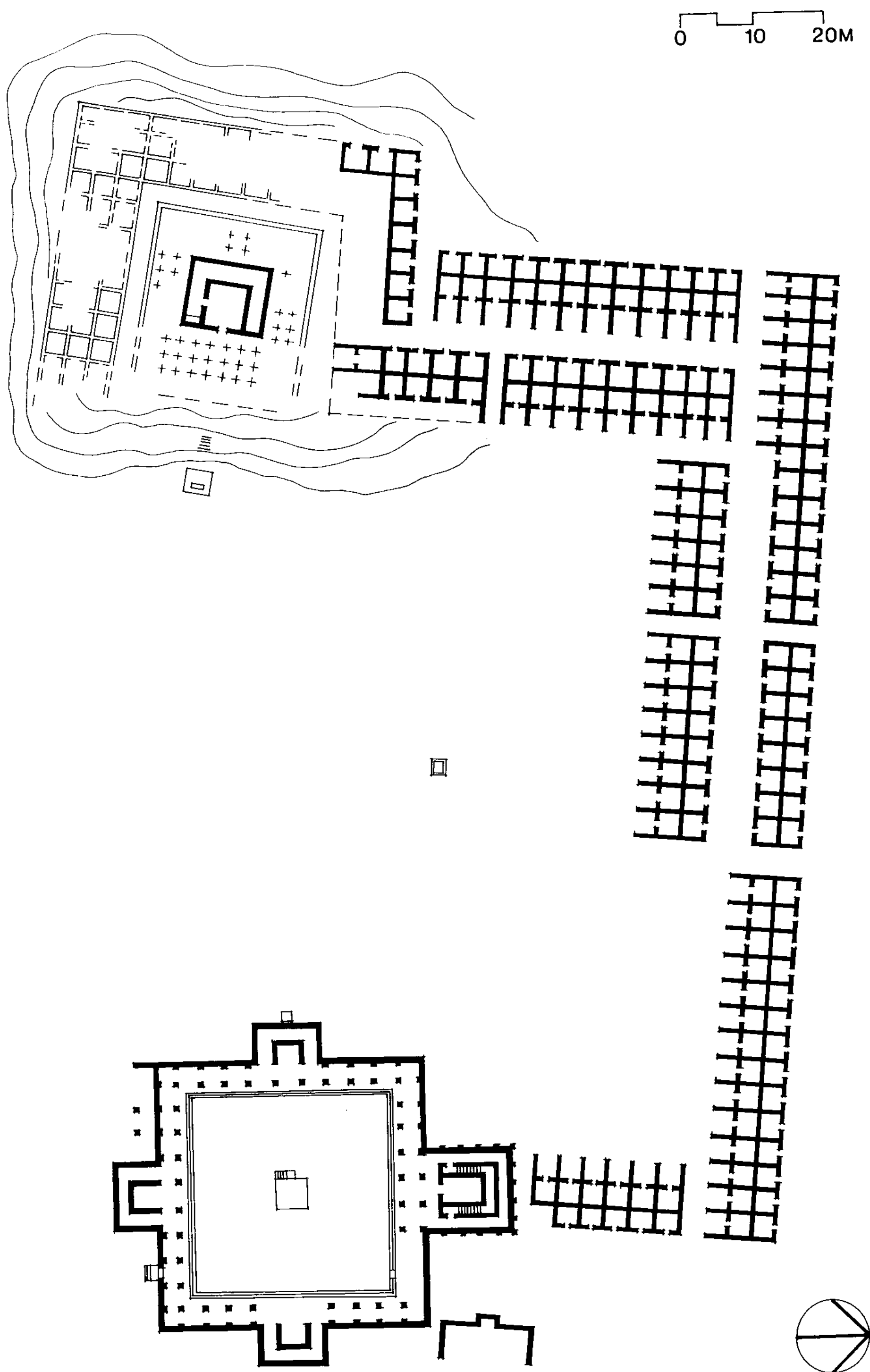
A double line of small chambers with shallow vaults, each with an arcaded



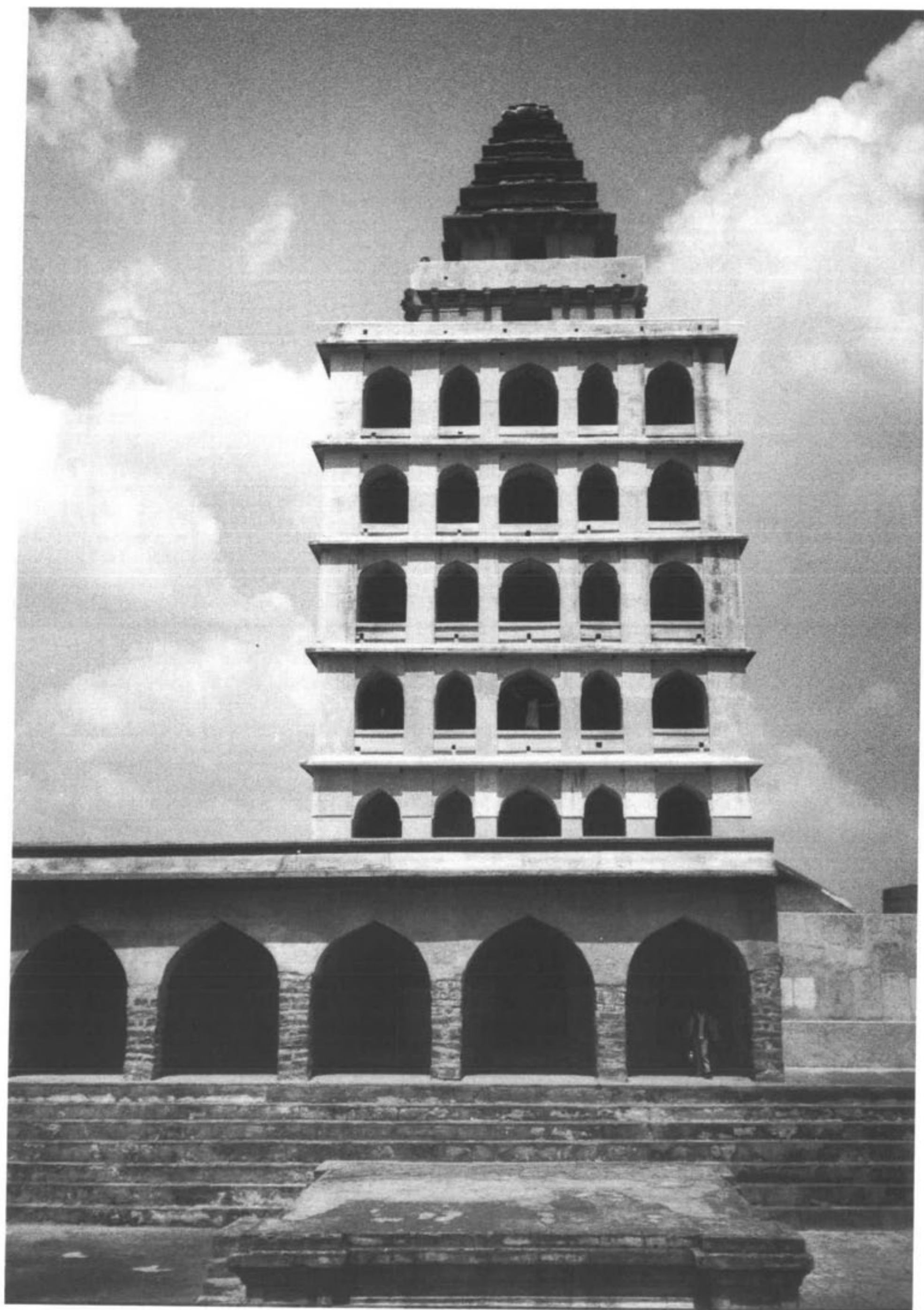
103 *Gagan Mahal, Anegondi, seventeenth century*

verandah arranged back to back, are most likely to have served as stables for horses and accommodations for grooms. They stretch westwards from the Kalyana Mahal, forming the northern boundary of the spacious parade grounds. Foundations of a royal residence have been uncovered on the mound that rises to the west. Like similar structures at Vijayanagara, this example has a central square room surrounded by a columned verandah and subsidiary chambers. Only the plaster floor, stone footing blocks and lower portions of the rubble walls survive. Immediately below these ruins, and reached by a descending spiral staircase, is a large square slab and a bolster that formed part of a ceremonial seat; both are cut out of grey-green granite, and raised on a stone basement with elegantly finished mouldings. It is possible that the Nayaka ruler sat here when inspecting his troops and war-animals.

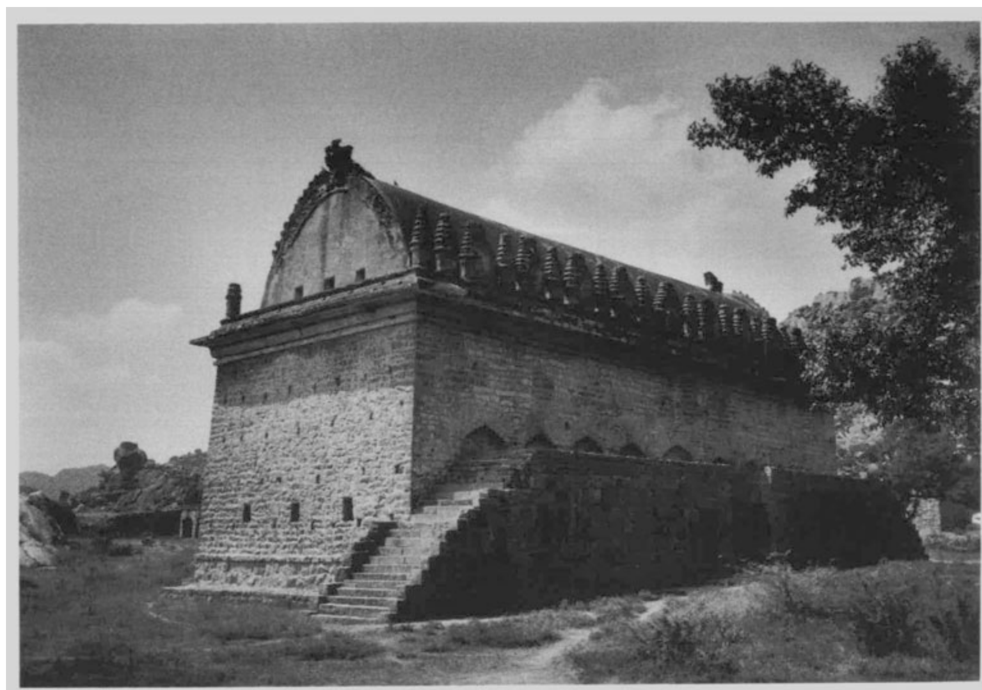
Granaries with pointed arched vaults are prominent in the royal complex at Gingee. One example with four interconnecting chambers presents an austere, unadorned façade capped by angled eaves and a parapet of merlons. Another is only single-chambered, but displays additional decorative features, including a parapet of temple-like elements concealing the curved sides of the vault and a frieze of foliate motifs and yali heads at the arched ends (Fig. 106). The open



104 Plan of Kalyana Mahal, stables and excavated residence, Gingee, seventeenth century



105 Tower, Kalyana Mahal, Gingee



106 Granary, Gingee, seventeenth century

pavilions in the vicinity, one of which has an ornamental parapet, may have been places of reception and entertainment. Mounds of overgrown rubble indicate the presence of numerous buried features that await excavation. A large tank with a colonnade on four sides is located on the south side of the complex.

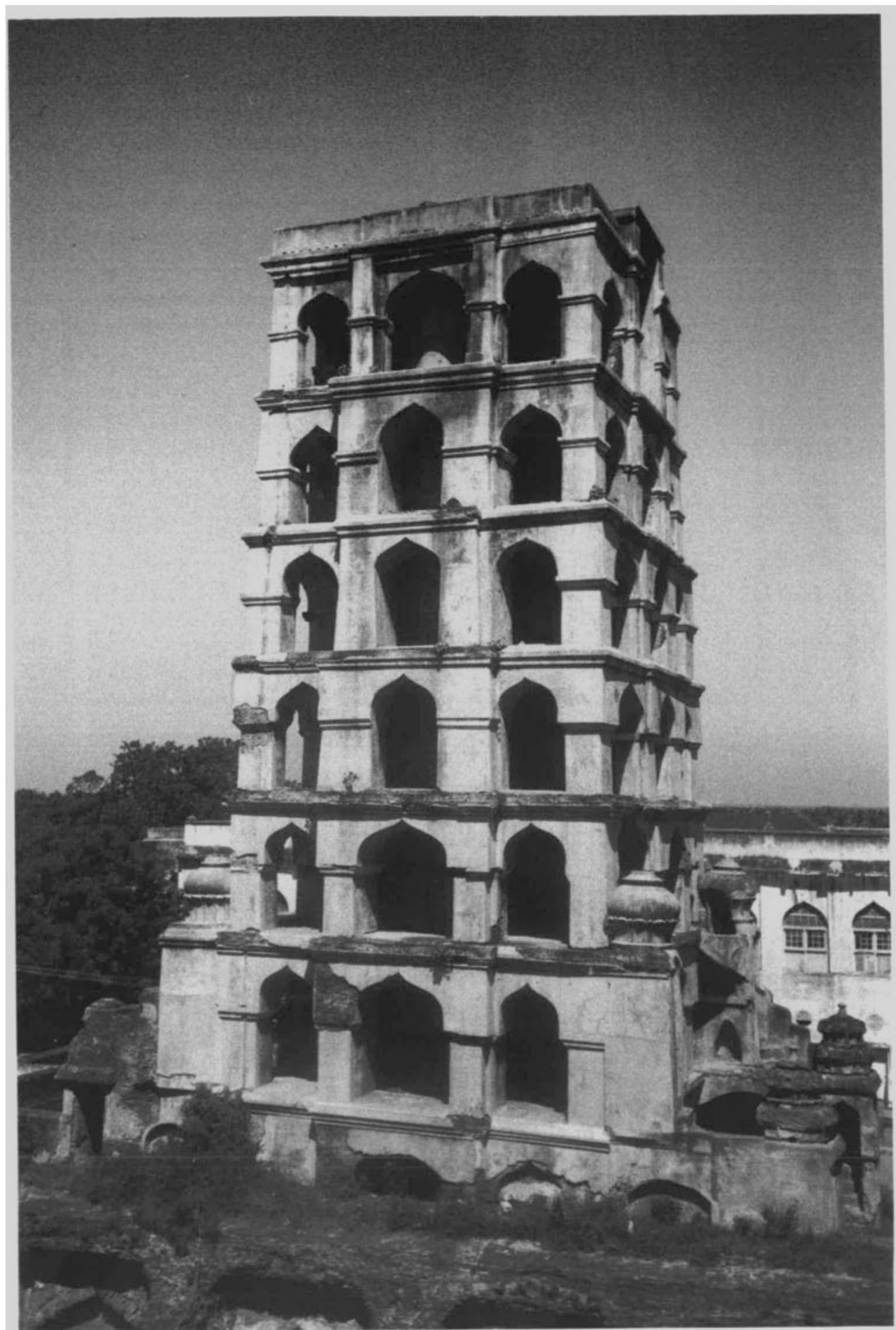
The royal complex at Thanjavur, which occupies a high-walled compound in the middle of the city, is mostly dilapidated and unoccupied; two sets of apartments have been renovated in recent times to provide accommodation for a sculpture gallery and a manuscript library. At the core of the Nayaka palace is a square court with a domed entrance chamber on the north. The south side is overlooked by a two-storeyed structure divided into corridors and chambers; pointed arches support shallow domes and vaults. In the middle of the roof rises a square chamber with a pyramidal tower (Fig. 107). European-styled balustrades and fluted finials on the diminishing seven storeys are later features.

The imposing audience hall at Thanjavur, which faces on to the same court from the west, now houses the collection of bronzes which are the glory of the sculpture gallery. Substantial circular piers with prominent bases and capitals support broad arches with cusped contours. The interior is roofed with a variety of petalled domes, pyramidal vaults, shallow octagonal domes and a

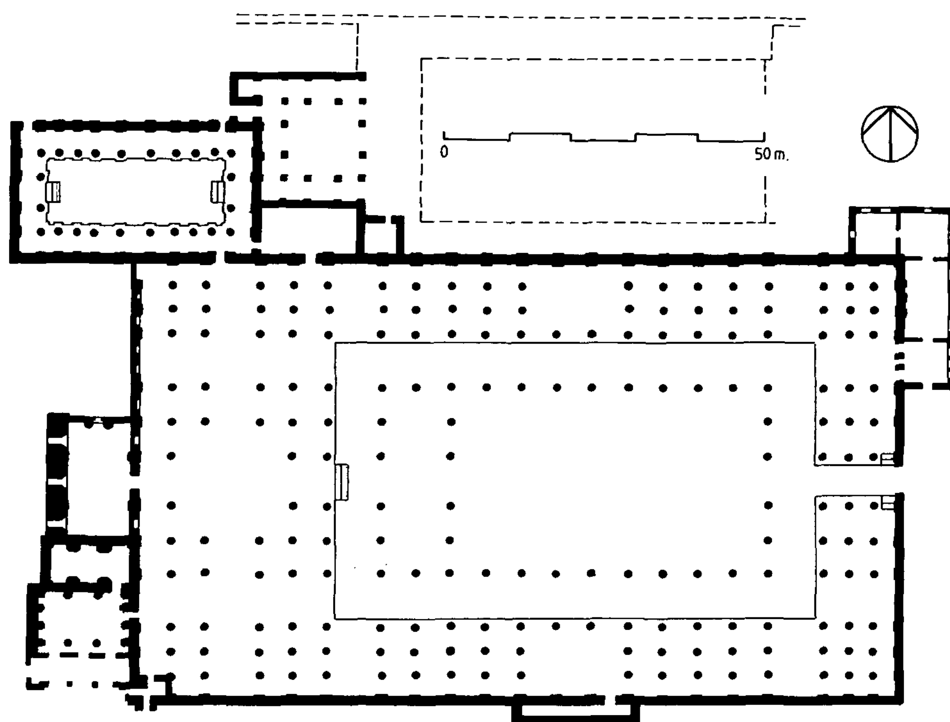


107 Tower, Thanjavur, seventeenth century

curved vault with ribbed sides, the last over the throne chamber. On the walls at the rear of this chamber is a plaster tableau in high relief depicting the coronation of Rama. The chamber is dominated by a grey-green granite slab that served as the Nayaka throne. More than 5 metres square, the slab has its sides covered with friezes of bearded men holding fly-whisks, horse-riders, female dancers and mythical beasts; it is raised on short legs. The principal façade of the audience hall consists of a simple arcade of cusped arches cloaked with plaster figures, animals and scrollwork, much restored in later times. Lotus finials crown the domes and vaults that protrude above the flat roof. A detached, seven-storeyed tower with triple arcades on each side overlooks the complex from the north-west (Fig. 108). The corners of the lower storeys are marked by finials with miniature dome-like caps on petals. They imitate turrets in contemporary mosque and tomb architecture, such as that of the Qutb Shahis. There is no upper chamber like that which crowns the Kalyana Mahal at Gingee, with which the tower may otherwise be compared.



108 Detached tower, Thanjavur, seventeenth century



109 Plan of palace, Madurai, seventeenth century

The south-eastern quadrant of the Thanjavur complex is identified as the Maratha residence, and is commonly connected with the career of Shahji. The central court of this palace is surrounded on three sides by arcades. The audience hall on the west is a lofty structure with massive octagonal piers creating two rows of five bays. Pointed arches support a variety of domes and vaults.

Only two fragments of Tirumala Nayaka's palace at Madurai still stand, the audience hall and dance hall (Fig. 109). In spite of extensive renovations to this complex in the nineteenth century, the halls still retain their majestic scale. The audience hall is approached through a rectangular court surrounded by arcades (Fig. 110). Plasterwork ornaments the pointed arches, while fully modelled yali brackets are placed beneath the overhanging eaves. Aisles on four sides of the court are regularly punctuated by square and rectangular chambers. The aisles are created by circular piers in plaster-covered stonework carrying broad arches with pointed or cusped profiles (see Fig. 89). Shallow vaults roof the aisles, but the chambers are emphasised by domes and curved vaults raised high on clerestory walls with arched openings to admit light. The apexes of these domes and vaults are marked by fully modelled lotus finials. The throne



110 Arcaded court, palace, Madurai

chamber, which is placed against the middle of the western wall, is crowned with a dome no less than 15 metres in diameter. This is supported on an octagonal drum and has two rows of arched openings set into its curving masonry. Plaster ornamentation smothers the walls and arches with lotus and foliage motifs, yalis and winged beasts; painted lotus designs cover many of the vaults and domes. This decoration is mostly nineteenth-century restoration, but appears to have been based on original models.

The dance hall which adjoins the audience hall at its north-west corner has a lofty double-height interior spanned by eight transverse arches with cusps. The central floor area is surrounded by arcades on a low platform, perhaps intended for spectators. The cusps of the arches above the arcades and the windows in the side walls are all richly encrusted with plaster animals, birds and scrollwork. Flame-like motifs protrude from the fringes, and yali heads are positioned at the apexes. The wall pilasters are concealed by birds, beasts and attendants in high relief. As elsewhere in the palace, the plasterwork is nineteenth-century. A second court surrounded by colonnades with a domed chamber at one end adjoined the dance hall on its eastern flank, but this was dismantled long ago.

There is only limited evidence of Nayaka palace architecture in the Kannada zone. Courtly structures inside the fort at Bidnur, citadel of Shivappa, are

mostly demolished, except for footing blocks of a columned audience hall and the collapsing walls of several associated chambers. An unusual example of a garden residence is preserved at Devaganga, some 5 kilometres north of Bidnur. This resort is laid out in hilly terrain so as to take advantage of a natural stream. Water is diverted into a long channel that runs along the middle of a rectangular terrace bounded by retaining walls. The channel feeds a large square tank with a pavilion in the middle, as well as fountains with star-shaped, cusped and petalled sides. A small shrine dedicated to Shiva overlooks the garden, but there are no indications of any actual palace buildings.

CHAPTER 6

SCULPTURE

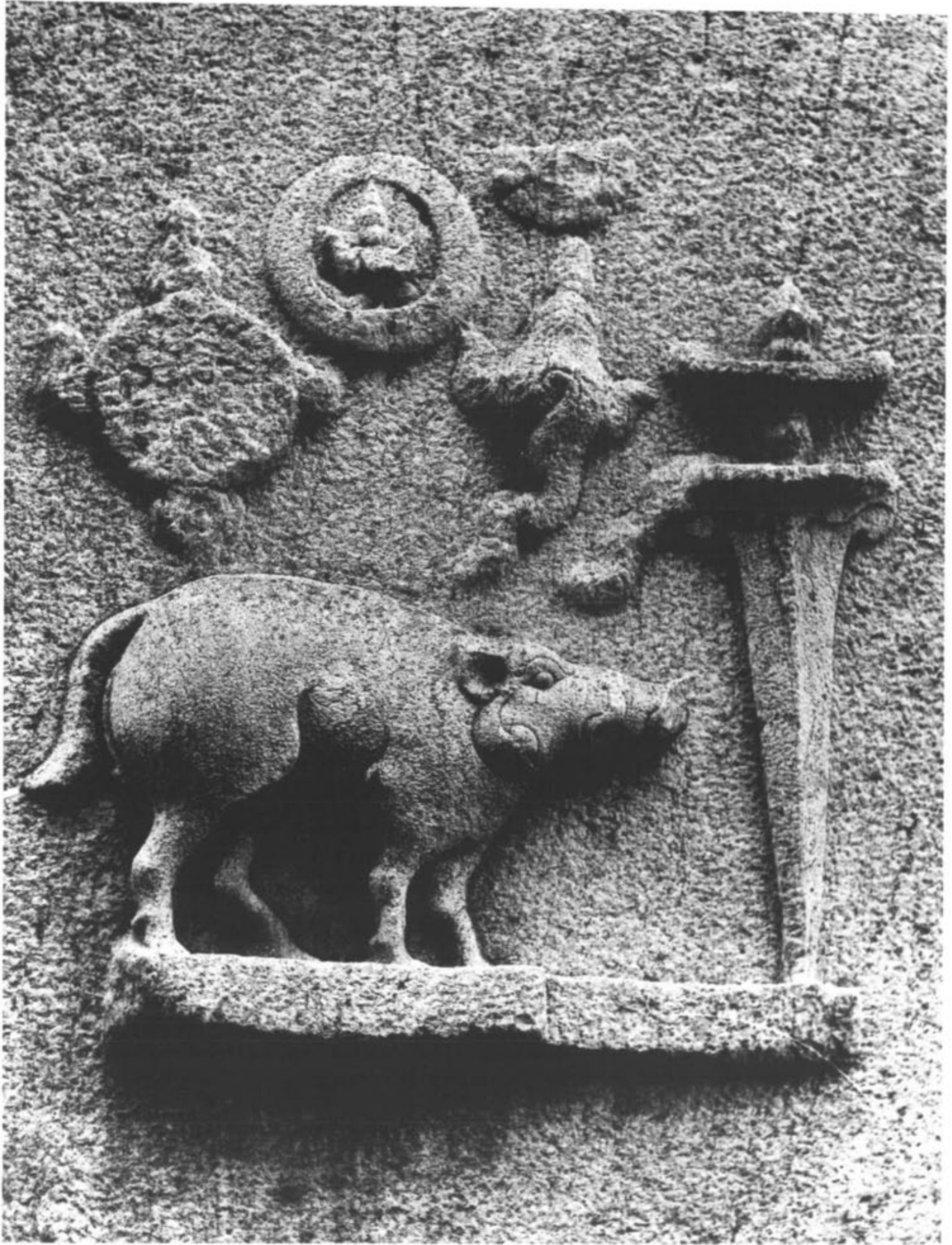
A broad spectrum of divinities received worship in the temples of Southern India between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, reflecting the sustained popularity of the major cult deities in all of their manifold aspects. They include several newly fashionable gods associated with particular temple centres: for example, Venkateshvara of Tirumala and Narasimha of Ahobilam in the Telugu zone, and Varadaraja of Kanchipuram and Ranganatha of Srirangam in the Tamil zone. The cults of some deities, such as Vitthala, were even imported from outside the region, in this case from the Maratha zone to the north. The importance accorded such divinities extends also to the realm of saints, as is demonstrated by the popularity of legendary personalities such as Kannappa, Chandesha and Sambandar.

Virtually all of these gods and saints find their expression in the art of the period. Three-dimensional stone or metal images are enshrined within temple sanctuaries or inserted in niches; relief compositions cover basements, walls and columns. Nor is this figural art limited to mythological and legendary personalities; a host of guardians, maidens, dancers and musicians plays a significant part in temple sculpture. Human depictions include rulers and their retinues, generally in the role of devotees. Their visualisation in granite and bronze may be considered an outstanding artistic achievement.

In addition to the figural themes just mentioned, there is a whole class of animal and vegetal subjects that pervades the sculptural art of the era. As will be shown, the mythical yali takes on a particular significance in the plastic arts, especially in its application on temple columns. Here too may be mentioned the insignia of the Vijayanagara dynasty, the boar and sword accompanied by the sun and moon, an often repeated motif in temple sculpture (Fig. 111).

STYLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

An overall survey of Southern Indian sculpture during the Vijayanagara and Nayaka periods reveals both the continuation of long-established artistic patterns and the invention of new types. The repetition of older iconographic forms, especially those developed under the Cholas and Pandyas, is partly explained by the fact that cult images in many sanctuaries were either pre-Vijayanagara in date, or were intended as replacements of earlier images that had been removed or lost. So dependent are some stone, metal, plaster and ivory sculptures of gods and goddesses on past practice, that it is sometimes



111 Emblem of the Vijayanagara dynasty, east gopura, Alagar Perumal temple, Alagarkoil, sixteenth century



112 Somaskanda group, bronze, sixteenth century

difficult to distinguish later work from earlier prototypes. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the bronzes of the period. The Somaskanda group in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, for instance, is essentially Chola in composition and detail; only a stiffness in the postures and a sharpness in the modelling of the headdresses and jewellery suggest a sixteenth-century date (Fig. 112). This stylistic supposition is confirmed by an inscription on the base indicating that the bronze was originally commissioned for the Ekambareshvara temple at Kanchipuram, a temple that rose to prominence at this time.

In spite of the pervasive influence of previous models, particularly for the major icons with which temples were furnished, sculptures during this era manifest identifiable stylistic factors. A good idea of the character of the plastic arts under Vijayanagara may be had from two quite different stone panels. The Hanuman slab now on display in the Archaeological Museum at Kamalapuram, at the edge of the Vijayanagara site, is a typical example of the aesthetic vigour achieved in the fifteenth century (Fig. 113). Hanuman strides purposefully across the surface of the granite, one hand raised up in defiance, the other clutching an uprooted bush; the tail curls over the monkey head. The bold modelling of the figure combined with the clearly defined jewels and tassels is



113 Hanuman, fifteenth century

characteristic. But greater refinement was sometimes also attained in Vijayanagara sculpture. A fine example of the more sophisticated manner is the stone portrait of Krishnaraya placed in a niche inside the passageway of the north gopura at Chidambaram (Fig. 114). The figure is carved entirely in the round, the hands brought together in the usual attitude of devotion. The emperor has a slim body in a slightly swaying posture; a dagger is tucked under the left arm, behind which is the end of a pleated shawl.

Several related styles are revealed in Nayaka art. Major cult icons, especially those inserted into the wall niches of temple vimanas, take on an imposing formality that is unknown in earlier sculpture. A typical example is the seventeenth-century image of Venkateshvara inserted into a wall niche of the



114 Krishnaraya, north gopura, Nataraja complex, Chidambaram, sixteenth century

vimana of the Bhaktavatsala Perumal temple at Tirukkanamangai, a monument linked with the Thanjavur Nayakas (Fig. 115). The god holds the disc and conch in his rear two hands; one of the front hands is displayed in the gesture of protection. Not unlike the Somaskanda group already noticed, this panel



115 Venkateshvara, vimana niche, Bhaktavatsala Perumal temple, Tirukkanamangai, seventeenth century

owes much to Chola prototypes. The brittle detail and stiffness of posture are, however, hallmarks of the later period.

A more voluptuous idiom was evidently also favoured at this time. The six maidens carved directly on to the walls of the seventeenth-century Venugopala shrine in the Srirangam complex are among the most charming in all Nayaka art (Fig. 116). The hardening of the facial features and details of dress and jewellery, and the increased angularity in the bodies and limbs noticeable in contemporary sculpture seem to be modified here by ideals of feminine beauty. The elegance of these figures is accentuated by their graceful poses and the emblems that they hold, especially the vina, parrot and mirror. The Srirangam maidens have narrow pointed chins and long noses, and delicately modelled eyes and lips; their hair is bunched characteristically to one side; their full breasts contrast with their exaggeratedly thin waists. Tiers of jewelled bands ornament the richly patterned saris; tassels fly outwards to one side.

Not all sculptures produced in Southern India at this time conform to these

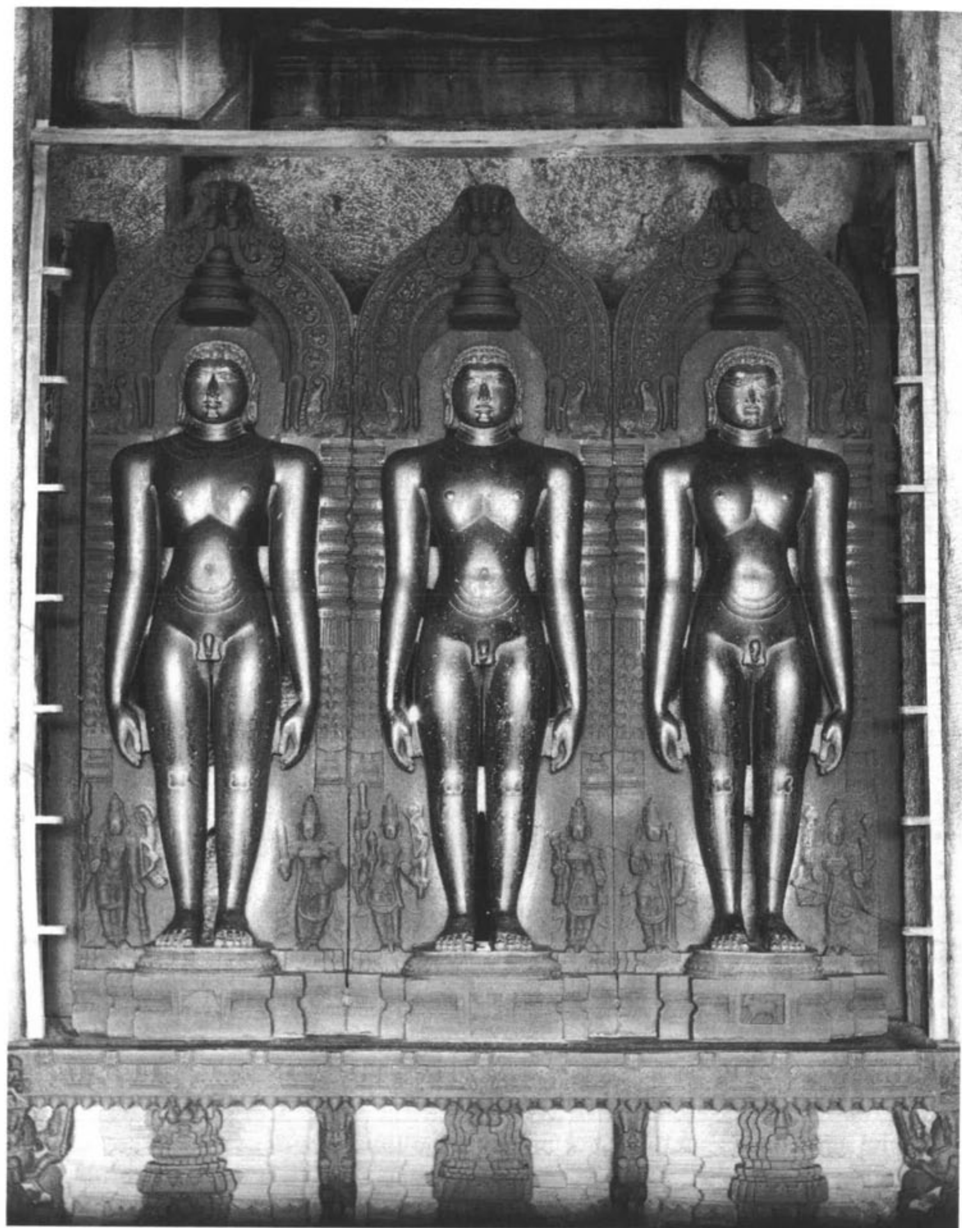


116 Maiden, Venugopala shrine, Ranganatha complex, Srirangam, seventeenth century

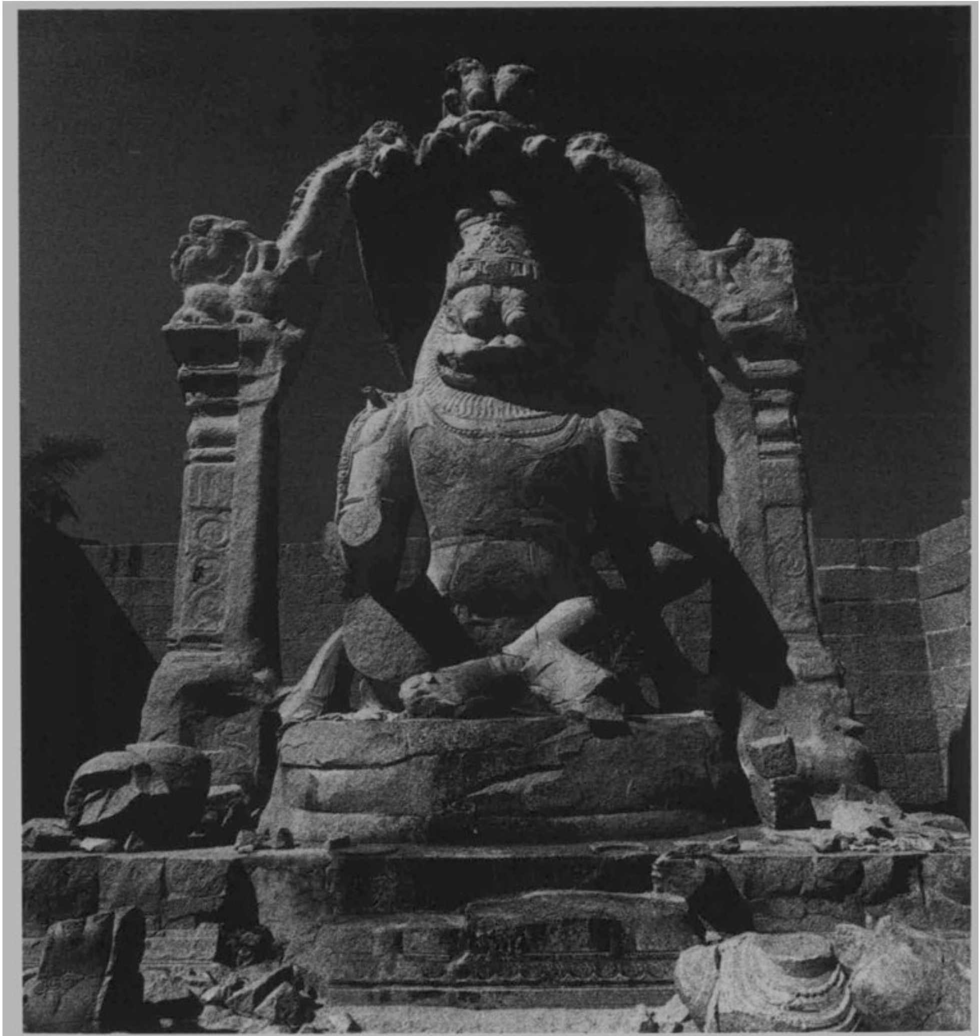
main stylistic currents. Regional modes persisted in peripheral districts, as in the western part of the Kannada zone where the influence of earlier Hoysala traditions prevailed, and in the extreme south of the Tamil zone which came partly under the sway of Kerala. An idea of these regional variations may be had from the Tirthankaras installed in the Chaturmukha Basti at Karkala in the Kanara country (Fig. 117). The twelve major icons date from the late sixteenth century, when the temple was founded. Each consists of a polished rounded figure, totally naked, with broad shoulders and pendant arms, set within an intricately carved frame. This formula follows well-established practice in Jain art, dating back to pre-Vijayanagara times.

MONOLITHS AND STELAE

One peculiarity of Southern Indian sculpture in these centuries is the tendency to chisel images out of solid granite boulders. Such monoliths served as the



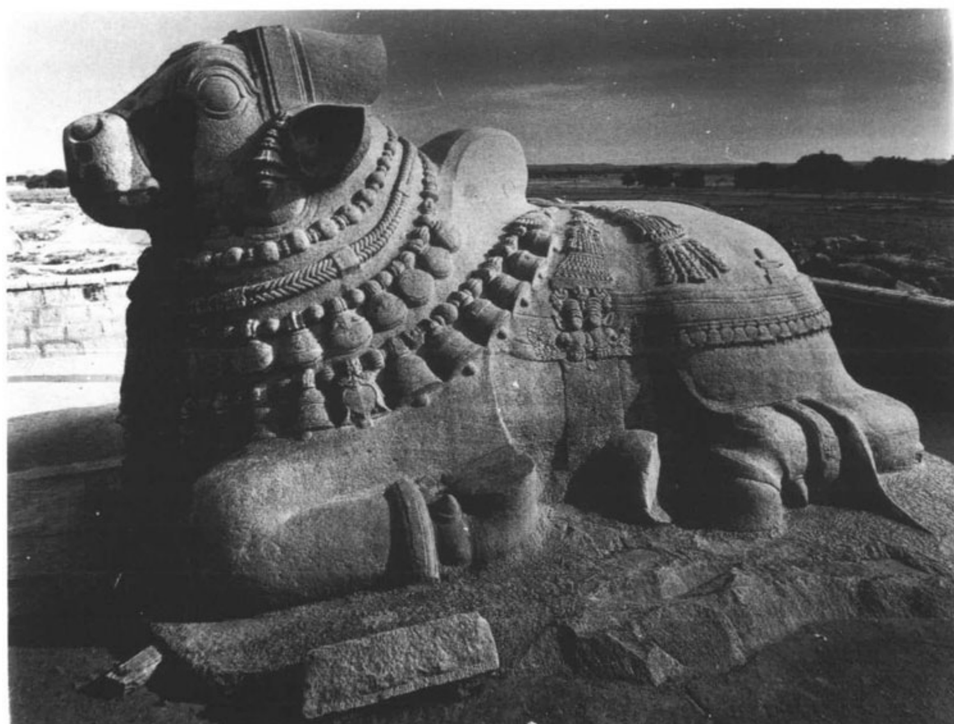
117 Tirthankaras, Chaturmukha Basti, Karkala, sixteenth century



118 Monolithic Narasimha, Vijayanagara, dated 1528

devotional focus of many Hindu and Jain cults, accounting for the location of temples and shrines on hilltops and inside natural crevices.

Granite sculptures at the Vijayanagara capital reveal a long-established experience with rock-cut techniques. Two monoliths of Ganesha on the rocky ridge above Hampi show the god in seated posture, the trunk nuzzling a sweet held in one hand. Monolithic Nandis also occur at the site, the largest being carved out of a boulder at the end of the colonnaded street at Hampi. Unfortunately, the head of the animal has been mutilated. By far the most impressive monolith at Vijayanagara is that of Narasimha seated in yogic posture, the legs crossed and bound together with a band (Fig. 118). The



119 Monolithic Nandi, Lepakshi, sixteenth century

sculpture, which is almost 7 metres high, was commissioned by Krishnaraya in 1528. The ferocious nature of the god is expressed by his bulging eyes and fantastic mouth; a multi-headed serpent hood rears up over the crown. The smaller figure of Lakshmi on the god's knee has been damaged.

Nandi monoliths are common throughout Southern India. Seated bulls are generally portrayed with ceremonial trappings, decked with bells, clappers, sashes and tassels. The animals are invariably carved in a naturalistic manner, seated with a slight tilt to one side. The Nandi at Lepakshi is of massive proportions, being more than 8 metres long (Fig. 119). It is a precursor of the impressive Nandi, dated 1664, carved out of a rock on the flank of Chamundeshvari hill outside Mysore. Gigantic Nandis are often ritual focal points within great Shiva temples. Independent pavilions sheltering such monoliths in the Thanjavur and Tiruvannamalai complexes date from the Nayaka era. But bulls were not the only animals to be represented. Another monolith at Lepakshi, this example hewn out of a detached boulder within the compound of the Virabhadra temple, portrays a large coiled serpent with a multi-headed cobra hood rearing up over a polished granite linga, phallic emblem of the god Shiva.



120 Monolithic Gommateshvara, Karkala, dated 1432

Jain monoliths are found at several holy spots in Kanara. One saint, Gommata, is singled out for special attention, no doubt inspired by the tenth-century colossus at Sravana Belgola. Sculptures of Gommata were set up on hilltops at Karkala in 1432 and at Venur in 1604. That at Karkala is more than 12 metres high; its obvious mass is partly alleviated by the rounded planes of the head and limbs (Fig. 120).

Carved stelae served a similar purpose to monoliths, being placed inside sanctuaries where they received worship, or set up in the open air inside temple compounds or outside city gates. Nowhere is this better seen than in the Kannada zone where a large number of stelae have been discovered belonging to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Popular divinities and fierce figures, such as Bhairava bristling with weapons and defiant Hanuman, are common (see Fig. 113). The vigour of such compositions has already been observed.

A related theme are the virakals, or hero-stones, recording the exploits of slain warriors. Numerous such memorials with reliefs of spirited horse-riders survive from the Vijayanagara era; some of the finest are found in Kanara. A remarkable group is set up outside the Parshvanatha temple at Kaikini, a tiny settlement 10 kilometres north of Bhatkal. Many of these slabs bear fifteenth-century dates. Each is divided into four narrow registers. The lowest two show scenes of battle, with warriors brandishing swords and shields, and fallen figures beneath. In the next register, the hero is seated in a palanquin, presumably being transported to heaven, accompanied by dancers and musicians. In the topmost register the hero worships a seated Jina, sometimes replaced with a linga, in a temple-like setting.

WALL PANELS: NARRATIVE RELIEFS

An outstanding feature of sculpture in these centuries is the development of narrative art, with panels assembled in rows to illustrate popular myths and legends. In spite of the overall predominance of sacred subjects, the earliest series of reliefs assigned to this era is entirely royal in character. This covers the sides of the multi-storeyed platform associated with the Mahanavami festival (Fig. 121). Individual granite blocks are carved in a somewhat crude, but undeniably vigorous manner that harks back to the middle of the fourteenth century when the royal centre at Vijayanagara was first laid out. Unlike temple reliefs, these sculptures are closely related to hero-stones, in both style and subject matter.

Processions of animals dominate many of the blocks on the Mahanavami platform. They include elephants with their trunks wrapped around trees, and even camels; mythical beasts, especially yalis, also appear. There are frequent displays of martial strength, with mounted warriors, footmen with shields, swords and spears, and men carrying clubs and staffs. Hunting activities are

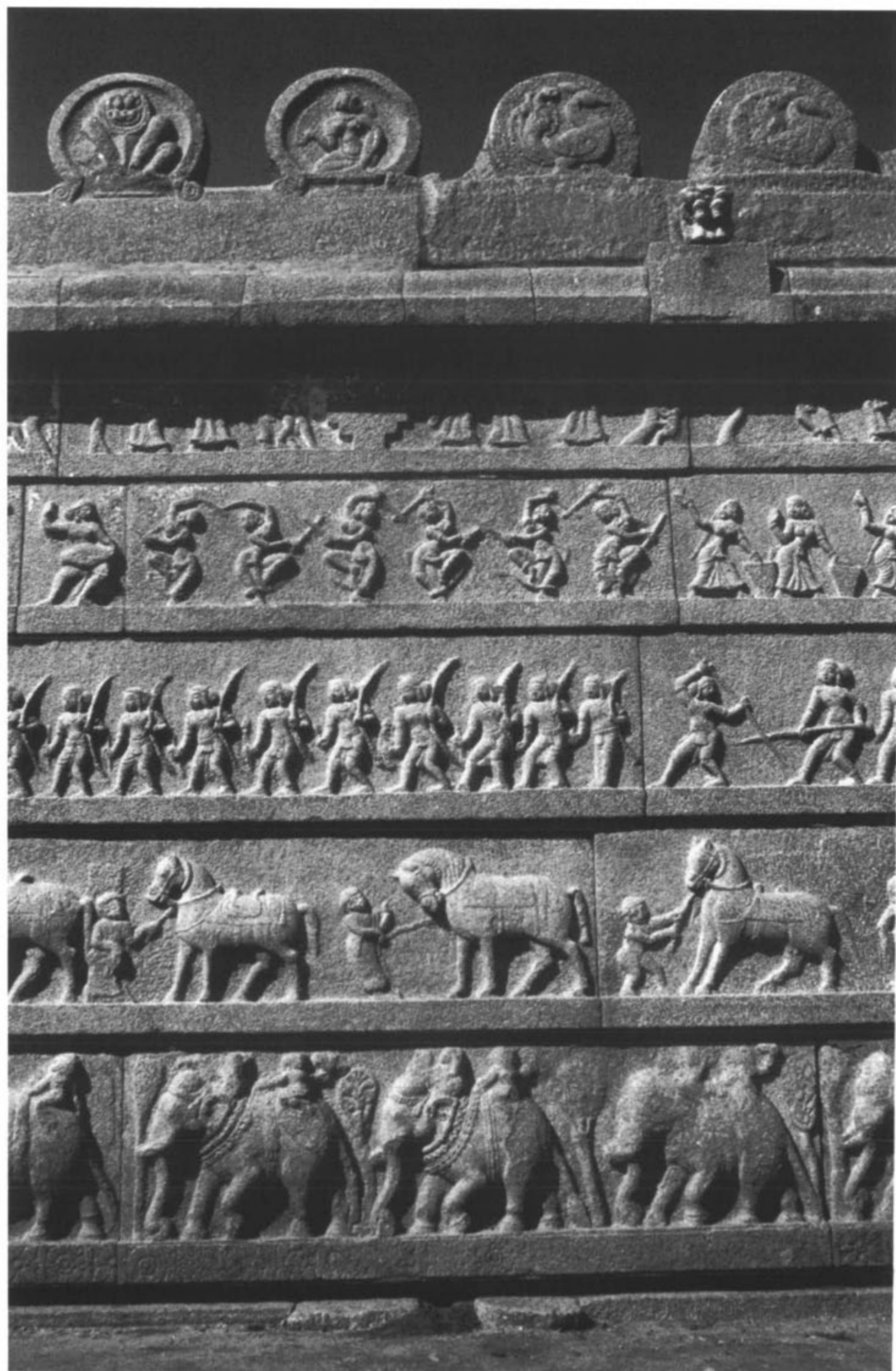


121 Reliefs, multi-storeyed platform, royal centre, Vijayanagara, fourteenth century

indicated by courtly figures with bows and arrows shooting deer and boar, or spearing lions and tigers; they are accompanied by dogs on leashes, or carry animals on their shoulders. Huntresses also appear, equipped with bows and arrows. The forest is populated with animals, such as deer and monkeys; lions and bulls fight together beneath trees.

Other reliefs on the platform are more courtly in spirit, such as male drummers, players of cymbals and reed instruments, dancers with pointed beards and conical caps, sometimes identified as Muslims, and wrestlers and acrobats. Females execute the local stick-dance and beat long drums. Some scenes show royal figures seated on couches, receiving visitors with conical caps, beards and long tunics, who incline their heads and hold their hands together in homage. Elsewhere, these royal figures are entertained by wrestlers, dancers and acrobats. Most of these figures and animals are shown moving towards the staircase in the middle of the west side of the monument, thereby suggesting some overall scheme by which these subjects were organised.

The spectacular parades of the Mahanavami served as the subject of another series of courtly reliefs at Vijayanagara. They are the panels on the compound wall of the nearby Rama temple, a foundation of the early fifteenth century (Fig. 122). These reliefs conform closely to descriptions of the Mahanavami by



122 Reliefs, outside of compound walls, Rama temple, royal centre, Vijayanagara, fifteenth century

Persian and Portuguese visitors. They portray elephants uprooting palm trees and lifting foliage; richly bridled horses, some leaping playfully, being led by attendants with long cloaks and pointed beards; military formations with warriors displaying varied weapons, headdresses and costumes; courtly women dancing and playing musical instruments. All of these animals, men and women proceed in a clockwise direction around the temple, the carvings running continuously across the stone joints. The parades are inspected by royal figures, seated in pavilions or mounted on horses accompanied by attendants holding parasols. The regal status of these figures is indicated by their formal postures, headdresses with bunched hair to one side and elaborate costumes.

It is perhaps surprising to discover that the royal topics at Vijayanagara just described are never again accorded such prominence in sculptural art. While it is true that temples dating from later centuries are often adorned with processions of elephants, horses, armed warriors, dancers and musicians, these topics are usually delegated to accessory parts of the monuments, such as basement and cornice friezes. Martial themes are generally reduced to accessory warriors in animal compositions on columns and piers (see below). Meanwhile, relief sculpture developed a narrative art that focused on sacred subjects, with a particular emphasis on epic narratives.

The Ramayana seems to have been an inexhaustible source for sculptors in this period. Two of the earliest sets of Ramayana reliefs occur on the Rama temple at Vijayanagara that has just been referred to. The first cycle consists of precisely 108 separate panels which are to be viewed in clockwise sequence, in three tiers, around the walls of the principal shrine (Fig. 123). Each panel expresses in compressed form a single episode in the story: for example, Dasharatha standing in front of the fire sacrifice officiated by the deer-headed sage Rishyashringa; Rama bending Shiva's bow; Rama and his brothers riding on elephants after their wedding ceremonies; Rama aiming his arrow at the golden deer; Ravana as an ascetic standing outside Sita's hermitage; Rama shooting an arrow through the seven palm trees; Hanuman handing over to Rama the head-jewel of Sita; Rama and demons approaching each other in war-chariots. The panels are arranged so that the six chapters of the story are spatially separated, the crucial events being positioned at corners and at either side of doorways. The panels tend to emphasise scenes that depict courtly activities, such as processions and marriages, rather than battles.

The second Ramayana cycle on the Rama temple covers part of the inner face of the enclosure walls and may be somewhat later in date. It occupies five rows of blocks, beginning at the north gateway of the compound, with the story of Shravanakumara which serves as a prologue, and finishing at the east gateway. The scenes here are quite different from those on the shrine walls: each block is filled with accessory figures, sometimes also background details



123 Ramayana panels, principal shrine, Rama temple

of architecture and landscape. Sita in captivity is shown seated in the ashoka grove surrounded by female guards. Hanuman appears three times: concealed in the foliage of the tree, receiving the chudamani jewel from Sita, killing a demon. This condensation of multiple events within a single frame is typical of this set of narratives.

Another fifteenth-century monument with Ramayana reliefs is the Rama temple at Penukonda. As at Vijayanagara, wall surfaces between the pilasters are filled with small groups of figures. The narrative moves in clockwise direction in three tiers around both the vimana and mandapa. A fourth, upper tier of sculptures depicts scenes from the story of the youthful Krishna: dancing on the hood of Kaliya, stealing butter from the pot, tugging a heavy mortar between two trees.

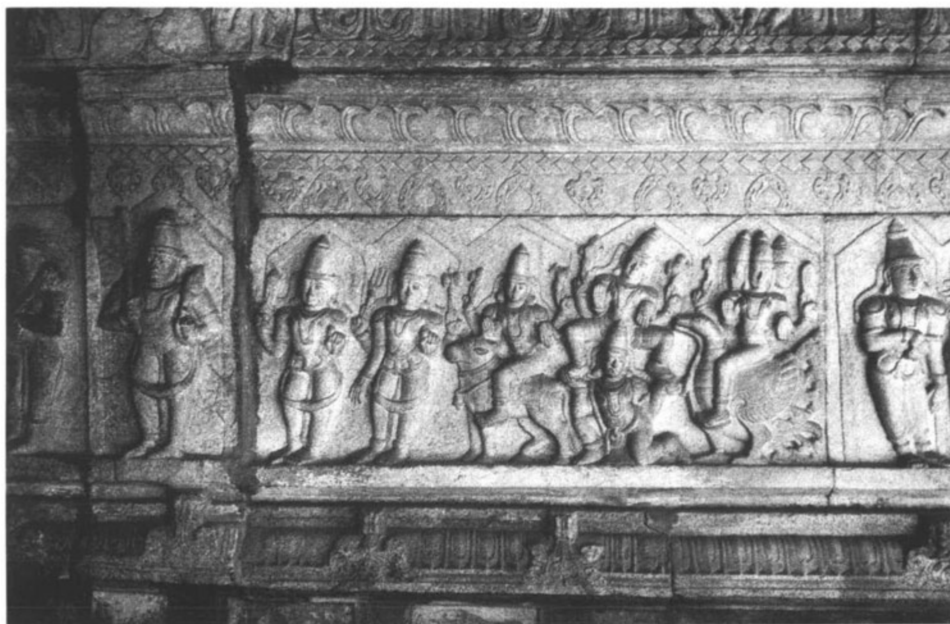
Further examples of fifteenth-century narratives are preserved on the compound walls of the Mallikarjuna complex at Srisailam. The scenes, which are carved on to individual blocks, depict a large range of topics, including many of Shiva's exploits. In the tale of Markandeya the narrative is compressed into three successive episodes within a single frame: Yama with his noose pursuing Markandeya, Markandeya desperately clutching the linga



124 Rescue of Markandeya, Mallikarjuna temple, Srisailam, fifteenth century

while Yama throws the noose around him, Shiva emerging out of the linga to plunge his spear into Yama (Fig. 124). Elsewhere in this series, Shiva is shown wandering naked among the forest sages, and fighting with Arjuna in the form of Kirata, the hunter. Several carvings illustrate local legends: the story of the princess Chandravati and the black cow who gave its milk to a linga-like stone, and the romance between Shiva and Chenchu, a local tribal maiden. The lower panels at Srisailam have lines of elephants and prancing horses, also warriors brandishing swords, shields, bows and arrows, and hunters spearing bears. Reliefs in the Virabhadra complex at Lepakshi, probably also dating from the fifteenth century, cover the outer face of what was originally an external enclosure wall. They depict two stories pertaining to the mythology of Shiva; the sacrifice of Siriyala and the penance of Arjuna. Both narratives conclude with the miraculous appearance of the god riding on Nandi.

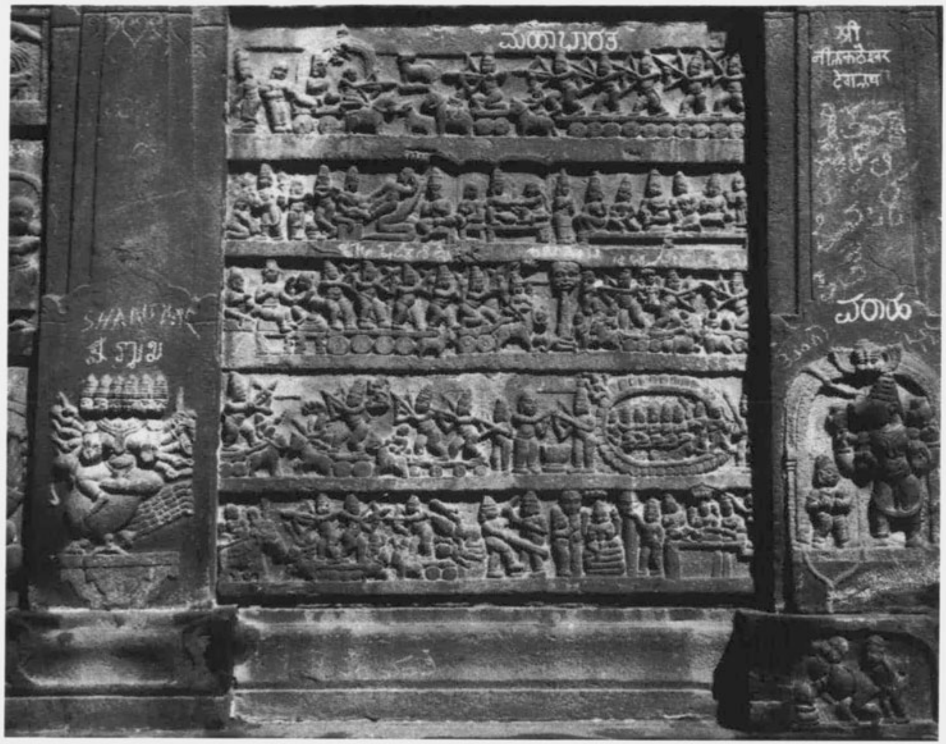
Wall reliefs persist in the temples of the Kannada and Telugu zones throughout the sixteenth century. The Chintala Venkataramana temple at Tadpatri has triple sets of panels on the outer walls of the vimana and attached mandapa mostly accompanied by identifying labels. The narrative begins at the south porch of the enclosed mandapa, and proceeds in clockwise motion around the building. Long friezes over the doorways illustrate the coronation



125 Processions of gods, Bhoganandishvara complex, Nandi, sixteenth century

of Rama, and Sita's fire ordeal. Krishna scenes are combined with Ramayana panels on the vimana walls. Sculptures of the Bhoganandishvara complex at Nandi in the south-eastern corner of the Kannada zone include long panels showing processions of gods, sages and attendant women, all participants in the marriage celebrations of Shiva and Parvati (Fig. 125). The figures are carved in rounded relief, and run continuously around the minor shrines of the complex.

The western part of the Kannada zone, with its variant forms of temple architecture, also preserves examples of narrative art. Basement reliefs on the sixteenth-century Vidyashankara temple at Sringeri, for instance, portray a large variety of legends. They include a complete account of the Kirata story as related in the Mahabharata, beginning with Arjuna's penance and proceeding via various battles to the final scene where Shiva confers the boon of the pashupata weapon. The story unfolds in no less than sixteen small panels framed by forest sages. Panels illustrating epic stories also occur on the Ketapayya Narayana temple at Bhatkal, where some nineteen Ramayana scenes are carved on to basement blocks beneath the wall screens. The sequence begins with the fire sacrifice of Dasharatha, immediately left of the west doorway; it continues with a selection of episodes, concluding with the death of Ravana and the subsequent enthronement of Rama.



126 Ramayana scenes, Nilakanteshvara temple, Jambitge, dated 1733

Narratives survived as an important aspect of temple art in the region into the early eighteenth century, as is shown by reliefs on the Nilakanteshvara temple at Jambitge (Fig. 126). This small monument is located in the vicinity of Sringeri, and is related stylistically to the later projects of the Keladi Nayakas. Its outer walls are completely covered with densely packed bands of miniature figures portraying episodes from the Ramayana and Mahabharata, as well as from local legends.

Such friezes are almost totally unknown in the Tamil zone during these centuries, no doubt because paintings came to serve as the primary vehicles for story telling. Those narratives that do occur, however, are generally consigned to the outer parts of temples, such as entrance gopuras. Sixteenth-century gateways of the Adikeshava Perumal temple at Sriperumbudur in the northern part of the Tamil zone and the Venkataramana temple at Gingee, for instance, have their passageway walls covered with sequences of Ramayana and Krishna episodes; the narratives generally proceed upwards from the bottom tiers. Among the related topics that appear here are scenes of the churning of the cosmic ocean.

COLUMNS AND PIERS: FIGURAL THEMES

A striking aspect of the plastic arts in Southern India during these centuries is the importance given to carvings on granite columns and piers. The mandapas, colonnades and corridors that occupied an ever-increasing proportion of space within religious complexes attracted the greatest artistic attention, in terms of both the invention of new subjects and the development of virtuoso carving techniques. Columns and piers were transformed into sculpture galleries displaying a large variety of figural and animal themes.

Mandapas and porches dating from the fourteenth century, especially in monuments in the Kannada and Telugu zones, have columns with cubic blocks carved with figures. The wide range of subjects demonstrates that artists were interested in representing multiple aspects of the god or goddess to whom the temple was consecrated, as well as related deities and decorative themes. One of the finest and earliest ensembles of column sculptures is preserved in the Madhavaraya temple at Gorantla (Fig. 127). The emphasis here is on scenes from the Ramayana, as well as illustrations of the Narasimha and Krishna stories; ancillary topics, such as acrobats, wrestlers and musicians, also occur. Though executed in comparatively low relief, the vigorously posed figures have rounded contours and finely etched details.

This interest in column sculptures is sustained throughout the fifteenth century, as is demonstrated in the Rama temple at the Vijayanagara capital, already referred to several times. The four central columns in the enclosed mandapa of the principal shrine all have triple blocks with carvings on four sides. All of the twenty-four emanations of Vishnu appear here, distinguished by different arrangement of emblems held in the four hands of the god; they are accompanied by the avataras, as well as by Hanuman and Sugriva. The figures are flanked by pairs of pilasters supporting foliated frames with yali heads at the apexes. The high polish of the granite creates smooth and rounded contours that contrast with the sharp details.

The high artistic standard of such sculptures was evidently not an isolated phenomenon at this time. The mandapa extension to the Narayana temple at Melkote is remarkable for its intricately worked carvings. The blocks here are covered with a large variety of mythological scenes: episodes from the Ramayana and Mahabharata, the most popular exploits of Krishna, and the story of Prahlada and Hiranyakashipu, the last being related in eleven separate compositions. Miniature figures above and below each panel often serve as accessories to the narratives. Other deities at Melkote include aspects of Shiva and a complete set of Dikpalas. Diverse groups of acrobats, female dancers and musicians, and a variety of fantastic animals also appear. The depth of the carvings and the clarity of the compositions reveal the early Vijayanagara style at its best. Another structure at Melkote with column carvings is the gopura



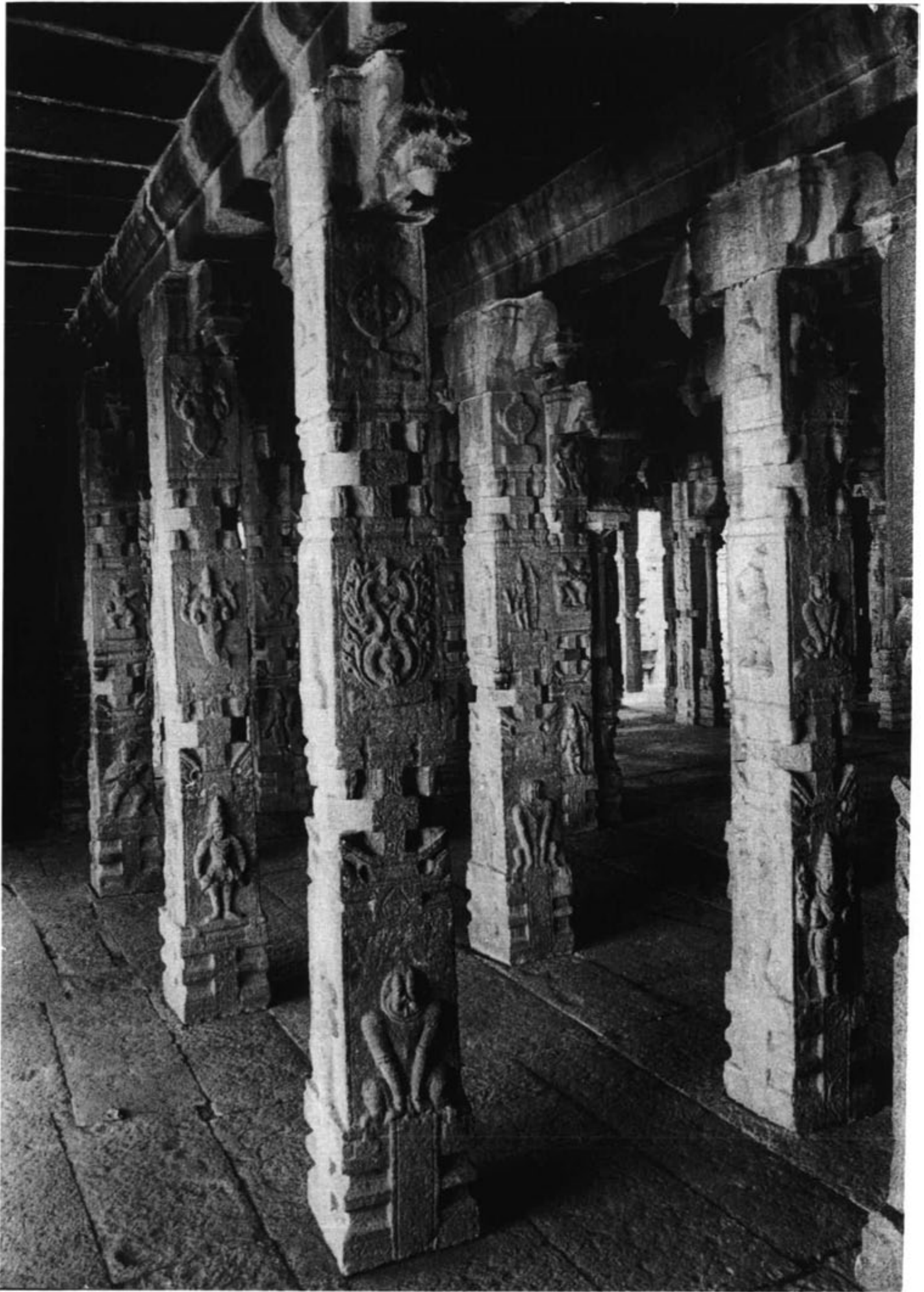
127 Column sculptures, Madhavaraya temple, Gorantla, dated 1354

standing freely outside the main complex. Guardians with clubs and river goddesses standing on makaras are carved in a monumental style that prefigures later developments; according to a long-established formula, they clutch creepers rising up the jambs.

The sixteenth century witnesses an increasing emphasis on column sculptures in mandapas that were added to earlier sanctuaries, or that were erected as free-standing structures in temple compounds. Cubic blocks on columns of the various religious monuments at Vijayanagara are covered with a large variety of divinities, as in the hundred-columned hall within the outer enclosure of the Virupaksha complex at Hampi (Fig. 128). A large number of saints and ascetics also finds expression in sculptural art at this time. This is well illustrated in the column blocks of the outer colonnade of the Jalakanteshvara temple at Vellore (Fig. 129). These figures have their hair tied up in a variety of styles or shaved off altogether; they carry staffs or small flags, and rest their elbows on stools or bind their legs up with bands. The saint Kannappa is shown gouging out his eye while touching the linga with his foot; another saint is distinguished by the fish on which he sits in yogic posture. Ascetics are occasionally paired with beautiful maidens in alluring poses. Other women are depicted as huntresses holding bows and arrows, picking out thorns from their feet. The lower blocks are generally reserved for squatting lions and ornamental geese or dancers, musicians, warriors, guardians and shepherds. Devotees, too, also appear, either as vahanas, such as Hanuman and Garuda, or as courtly figures wearing tall crowns.

It was during this period that the first attempts were made to liberate carvings from their supports. Figures such as Krishna dancing on Kaliya and Narasimha destroying Hiranyakashipu are fashioned in almost three dimensions on the colonettes of the mid-sixteenth-century mandapa extension of the Vitthala temple at Vijayanagara. A similar set of fully modelled sculptures animates the hall of the Narasimha temple at Ahobilam, a contemporary monument. The central aisle and open spaces here are flanked by figures that project well away from their supports. They show Narasimha opening up the column out of which he springs, grappling with Hiranyakashipu, and embracing a Chenchu maiden. Musicians and dancers appear with drums and small cymbals; courtly donors are identified by their pointed crowns and jewelled costumes.

This emphasis on piers with major sculptural compositions is sustained in other sixteenth-century temples, as in the Virabhadra shrine at Lepakshi. The principal sculptures of the inner mandapa are cut out of the curved sides of the corner piers; they show Shiva and Devi in various aspects, as well as musicians and dancing Ganesha. The central piers of the outer mandapa have projections with figures on the ends and at the sides. One of the finest is Bhikshatana walking on wooden sandals, his head tilted slightly (Fig. 130). The god carries



128 Column sculptures, one-hundred-columned hall, Virupaksha complex, Hampi, sixteenth century



129 Seated ascetic, Jalakanteshvara temple, Vellore, sixteenth century



130 Bhikshatana, Virabhadra temple, Lepakshi, sixteenth century

a skull bowl and small drum, and wears a garland of skulls draped beneath the knees. Among the neighbouring compositions are two versions of Natesha, and an unusual depiction of Dattatreya with triple heads. Attendant women are common motifs in the column sculptures of the period. They appear on the piers in the mandapas of both shrines in the Chintala Venkataramana complex at Tadpatri. Their heads and bodies are fully rounded, the hairstyles and jewels precisely rendered. They hold circular trays and other offerings. More ornate versions of such women adorn the columns inside the gopuras of the nearby Ramalingeshvara temple where they stand on makaras, grasping at curling vines.

By the seventeenth century, almost all stone sculpture within temples was focused on columns and piers. The mandapa of the Ramasvami temple at Kumbakonam, for instance, is dominated by groups of figures carved on to the piers lining the central aisles. Attendant women and dancers are shown in graceful postures, holding fly-whisks or curling creepers; donor figures stand in rigid stances, the eyes looking straight ahead. Large-scale mythological scenes are conceived as deeply carved tableaux with formal arrangements of divinities, consorts and attendants. In one panel Vishnu is seated on Shesha; the multi-hooded serpent rears up and over the head of the god who wears a tall cylindrical crown; attendants hold pots which are upturned in the act of pouring water (Fig. 131). Other panels show Trivikrama with one leg kicked up, accompanied by Bali and his retinue, and Rama seated with Sita accompanied by Lakshmana, Vishvamitra and the forest sages. The smooth bodies of these figures contrast with the sharply cut details of the jewels and costumes. The same is true of sculptures in temple gopuras, where maidens grasping vines are ubiquitous on passageway columns, especially in gateways. Several examples from the seventeenth century show Nayaka art at its most sensual. The figures in the eastern gopura of the Arunachaleshvara temple at Tiruvannamalai, for instance, are among the finest of the era (Fig. 132). The precision of the costumes, bunched hairdos and surrounding scrollwork contrast with the fullness of the heads and breasts.

Probably the most original contribution of seventeenth-century sculpture was the development of formal portraiture into a major art form. Donor images were carved on to temple columns and piers so as to face into the central spaces and aisles of mandapas and corridors. In the outer mandapa of the Bhuvaraha temple at Srimushnam, for instance, royal donors look towards the principal shrine (Fig. 133). They wear conical caps with overhanging tops, covered with elaborate textile patterns, as well as long earrings and necklaces of pearls; daggers are tucked into their belts. The robust limbs and protruding stomachs of these figures are typical of the Nayaka manner. These rulers are accompanied by smaller figures of queens.

The Pudu Mandapa that stands outside the Minkashi-Sundareshvara complex at Madurai has fully modelled sculptures on the central piers. Ten



131 Vishnu with attendants, Ramasvami temple, Kumbakonam, seventeenth century



132 Maiden clutching vine, Raya Gopura, Arunachaleshvara complex, Tiruvannamalai, seventeenth century



133 Royal donor and wives, Bhuvaraha temple, Srimushnam, seventeenth century

Nayakas are depicted here. Identifying labels reveal that the rulers are arranged in chronological order in two rows, the first, Vishvanatha, positioned opposite the last, Tirumala, sponsor of the whole project. In this way, the portraits function as a history of the dynasty. Each king is shown facing into the middle of the hall from the front of the pillar, accompanied by diminutive wives together with children. The rulers themselves are of ample proportions, with swelling stomachs and buttocks; their heads are raised up, the eyes wide open in adoration. Tirumala wears a cloth headgear filled with bunched hair falling to one side in the manner typical of the mid-seventeenth century; his predecessors wear pyramidal crowns with bulbous tops or simple turbans, perhaps in accordance with earlier fashion. Their attire is uniformly ornate, with earrings, necklaces, bracelets and waist bands; the costumes are richly patterned. The queens wear pleated and jewelled saris fanning out between their legs. Surviving paintwork indicates that these sculptures were once brightly coloured.

Other portraits of Tirumala and his queens occur in temples at Alagarkoil, Tirupparankunram and Srivilliputtur as records of this particular ruler's building activities. The carving of Tirumala's principal queen in a detached mandapa at Alagarkoil, for instance, is unusually delicate (Fig. 134). The jewels and costume are all clearly expressed; the slight tilt of the headdress gives the figure a charming poise. Almost life-size portraits fixed to columns in the Garuda Mandapa in the third enclosure of the Srirangam complex are tentatively identified as Virappa of Madurai together with his three brothers (west side), and Tirumala and his brother (east side). The decorated conical caps and cloth headgear which they wear are typical of the Nayaka court. That the practice of depicting family groups on temple columns continued into the early eighteenth century is demonstrated at Rameswaram, where portraits of the Setupati rulers grace the outer corridors of the complex.

Carvings of sacred figures on temple columns and piers continued to evolve throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One of the most ambitious assemblages of sculptures within a single setting is in the Kambattadi Mandapa at Madurai. Eight piers stand in the middle of this hall, with additional piers at either end; each is provided with one or more large-scale, virtually three-dimensional compositions. Almost all are dedicated to the manifold aspects of Shiva. One sculpture shows Shiva united with Devi as the androgynous Ardhanari, adorned with a garland strung out between the rear two hands; another shows the marriage of Sundareshvara and Minakshi in the presence of Vishnu, brother of the bride, who pours water from a ritual pot (Fig. 135). (An earlier version of this marital tableau is found in the nearby Pudu Mandapa.) The upper bodies of these figures are laden with jewels, while their lower bodies are draped in clinging cloths; the facial features are accentuated by sharply modelled eyes and eyebrows.



134 Queen of Tirumala, detached mandapa, Alagarkoil, seventeenth century



135 Marriage of Minakshi and Sundareshvara, Kambattadi Mandapa, Minakshi-Sundareshvara complex, Madurai, seventeenth century

Yet other themes are illustrated at Madurai. A group of eight goddesses guards the entrance portico to the temple that stands on axis with the Minakshi shrine within. Shiva as Bhairava, bearded dancers and musicians, and attendant women line the intermediate corridor. Immediately in front of the goddess sanctuary is a mandapa with a transverse aisle enlivened with vigorous sculptures that appear almost detached from their supports. The Pandava warriors appear here, especially Arjuna and Bhima, also Sugriva and Hanuman. Piers in the thousand-columned hall in the north-east corner of the complex are carved with mounted warriors, sometimes thought to be donor portraits, gypsy women, and Manmatha, god of love, together with his consort Rati, both riding parrots.

This mix of mythological, heroic and rustic motifs is typical of column sculptures in the Tamil zone in the early eighteenth century. Carvings in the mandapa positioned between the two principal gopuras of the Vishvanatha temple at Tenkasi, for example, create an impressive figural ensemble. One striking composition shows Shiva dancing with one leg kicked straight up (Fig. 136). The arms of the god, which fan outwards in all directions, hold a large



136 Dancing Shiva, Vishvanatha temple, Tenkasi, eighteenth century



137 Maiden with basket and diminutive figures, Lakshmi Narayana temple, Tirukkarangudi, eighteenth century

variety of weapons; an elaborately foliated arch rises above. The drama of the dance is enhanced by the cutout modelling and the increased scale, the figure being more than 2 metres high. Adjacent compositions portray Virabhadra, Bhikshatana, Venugopala, Rati and Manmatha.

Sculptures on the piers in the Venkatachala temple at Krishnapuram depict the Pandava heroes in the company of attendant women and gypsy men who bear diminutive figures on their shoulders. They are striking for their twisting postures, the full and smoothly rounded bodies, and the sharply cut facial expressions. Elongated figures of the same type adorn the mandapa columns of the Lakshmi Narayana temple at Tirukkarangudi, in the extreme south of the Tamil zone (Fig. 137). The heroes and gods that are depicted here are distinguished by their conical headdresses with circular side-pieces, a feature derived from nearby Kerala. In the temples of the transitional Tamil-Kerala zone, the Pandavas together with Manmatha are particularly popular. They are sculptured virtually in the round within colonnaded pavilions incorporated into the mandapa piers, as at Suchindram and Trivandrum.

COLUMNS AND PIERS: ANIMAL THEMES

Animals, both mythical and realistic, attain prominence in the sculptural decor of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century temples where they are reserved for the most important entry points and central aisles of porches, mandapas and corridors. Leaping animals define the entrances and peripheries of internal aisles and halls; they are frequently doubled and sometimes even tripled at the corners. The most common of these animals is the fantastic yali, an ithyphallic beast with lion-like body, mane, claws and curling tail. The head has protruding horns, bulging eyes and pointed teeth; a long elephant-like snout sometimes hangs down in a long curl, or rolls outwards in a double curve. Among the other imaginative creatures that adorn temple columns is the makara, with a crocodile-like head and an open mouth spouting aquatic foliation. More naturalistic are the horses richly bridled as for war. All of these animals are shown in fiercely vigorous postures, rearing up on their hind legs as if to spring outwards. Most are accompanied by diminutive figures of warriors brandishing swords and other weapons riding into battle.

An early appearance of the evolved yali motif is in the sixteenth-century mandapa extension to the Virupaksha shrine at Hampi (Fig. 138). Many of the piers are carved as rearing beasts on elephants and makaras. Corner piers are fashioned as double yalis, ingeniously carved to give full forms to one side of each beast, each with a mounted warrior. Identical yalis appear in the mid-sixteenth-century mandapa extensions of the Vitthala complex at the same site. The animals and accessory figures here are carved almost in three dimensions, partly free of the piers to which they are attached. Exuberant



138 Yali pier, Virupaksha temple, Hampi, dated 1510



139 Animal piers, kalyana mandapa, Jalakanteshvara complex, Vellore, seventeenth century

scrollwork adorns the flanks of the animals, while foliation hangs in sculptured masses from the chests.

That such animal themes were widespread in the temple art of the Telugu zone at the same time is shown in the Chintala Venkataramana complex at Tadpatri. The piers flanking the long central hall of the open mandapa are carved with warriors on rearing yalis. The manes of the animals are clearly defined, as are the details of the riders' costumes and weapons. Similar animals adorn the temples of the western Kannada zone, as in the interior of the enclosed mandapa of the Vidyashankara temple at Sringeri, where yalis are combined with makaras. Reduced versions of the same topic appear on the peripheral columns of the mandapas preceding the twin shrines at Keladi.

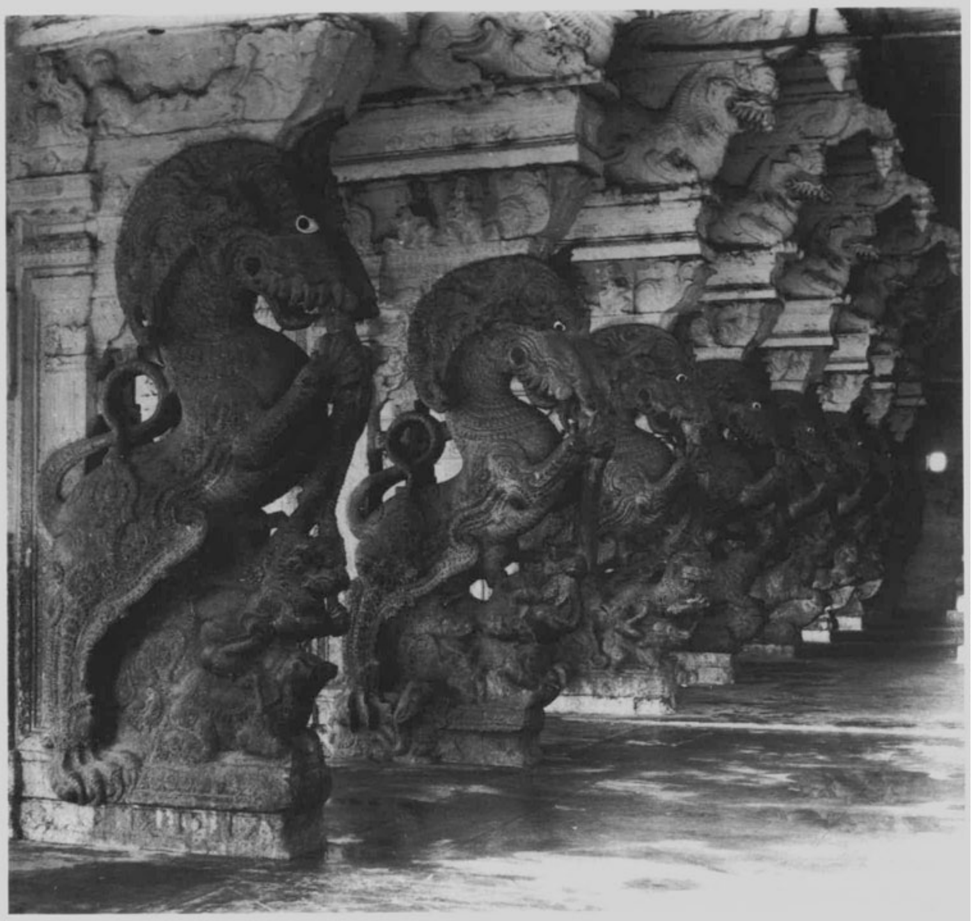
Yalis and horses find their greatest expression in the temples of the Tamil zone dating from the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, notably in the detached mandapas that stand in the outer enclosures at Vellore and Srirangam (Figs. 139 and 140). The vitality of these compositions and the virtuosity of the carving are unsurpassed in the plastic arts of Southern India. Horses with riders rear up, crushing warriors who hold up shields for protection. Other figures stab tigers and wild beasts. Some warriors are portrayed as Portuguese,



140 Animal piers, Shesharaya Mandapa, Ranganatha complex, Srirangam, seventeenth century

complete with European dress and hats, attacking Indian soldiers. The rendering of the costumes and weapons, as well as the attire of the horses, is precise and accurate. Mounted yalis with stalks of foliation issuing from their open mouths, or with elephant-like snouts, also appear; makaras with upturned heads are positioned below. The fierce nature of the animals is expressed in the bulging eyes, tusk-like teeth and curving horns. The piers of the kalyana mandapa that stands in the third enclosure of the Varadaraja temple at Kanchipuram are similarly treated, except here the sculptures of the mounted animals are somewhat reduced in scale. The blocks beneath and above are carved with military figures and fantastic animals, some with bird heads (see Fig. 44).

The uppermost brackets at Kanchipuram are conceived as crouching yalis. The same motif is common in the brackets of seventeenth-century temple architecture in the Tamil zone, especially in the central aisle of mandapas and corridors. Clusters of crouching yalis fanning outwards to support complicated networks of brackets mark the corner piers, especially at the intersection



141 Corridor with animal piers, Vaikunthanatha temple, Srivaikuntam, eighteenth century

of aisles. A dramatic illustration of this device is seen in the Jambukeshvara temple on Srirangam Island. Throughout the seventeenth century there is a tendency entirely to transform columns into rearing animals, with ever-larger yalis leaning forwards to invade the central spaces. That the animals themselves are of primary importance is revealed by the fact that riders are frequently omitted, the only reference to battle being the much smaller elephants, makaras or secondary yalis beneath, occasionally consuming human fighters. The yali heads are often augmented, with a corresponding expansion of the manes; the paws are brought together to clutch the falling snouts; the eyes take on exaggeratedly ferocious expressions. The finest examples of these beasts are

those in the temples of the Madurai Nayakas, not only within the great complex at the core of their capital, but also in later projects, as in the corridor of the Vaikunthanatha temple at Srivaikuntam, a celebrated pilgrimage site in the Tambarapani valley (Fig. 141).

PLASTERWORK

The multiplication of polychrome plaster figures on the upper parts of vimanas and gopuras results in a dense and colourful imagery that contrasts with the stone sculptures beneath. Sadly, the fragile nature of the plasterwork means that most sculptures in this medium dating from the Vijayanagara and Nayaka periods have either been eroded by rain and sun, or completely renovated and repainted.

Temples at Vijayanagara are largely unrestored; their plaster portions, even if damaged, often truthfully preserve sixteenth-century practice. The parapet of the porch extension to the Rama temple in the royal centre, for instance, is punctuated with niches containing major deities such as Rama and Sita, Narasimha and Venugopala. Accessory figures, including guardians and courtly devotees, are lined up on either side (Fig. 142). The delicacy of the modelling creates rounded contours for heads and bodies, as well as sharply detailed headdresses, facial features and costumes. Similar compositions, with enlarged niches housing major divinities and flanking figures, adorn vimanas and gopura towers.

The principal gopura of the Krishna temple at Vijayanagara is of unusual interest; panels on the lower storey depict battle scenes with armed warriors, some mounted on horses, with chariots and foot soldiers. It is tempting to imagine that these scenes portray Krishnaraya's victory over the Gajapatis. (A stone image of Balakrishna removed on this campaign from the captured fort at Udayagiri was actually installed in the monument.) Other well-preserved examples of plaster sculpture at Vijayanagara are found on the parapets of the Raghunatha temple on Malyavanta hill. Deities stand in parapet niches accompanied by devotees, armed warriors and courtly women.

Only isolated instances of original seventeenth-century plasterwork survive from the Tamil zone. Figures on the images on the vimana tower of the Rajagopala temple at Mannargudi, for example, represent courtly personalities together with attendant women in a variety of embraces, occasionally with multiple partners (Fig. 143). They are shown in swaying postures, with clearly expressed faces, headdresses, jewels and pleated costumes. (In these respects they resemble ivory statuettes; see below.) Almost exactly the same themes occur on the vimana tower of the temple at Gangaikondacholapuram, a Chola monument that was extensively remodelled by the Thanjavur Nayakas.



142 Devotees, parapet detail, Rama temple, Vijayanagara, fifteenth century



143 Courtier and consorts, vimana tower, Rajagopala temple, Mannargudi, seventeenth century

Plasterwork invariably cloaks the diminishing storeys of gopura towers, often at the expense of the architectural elements which are partly obscured. A peculiar feature of gopura sculpture is the transformation of the horseshoe-shaped ends of capping shala roofs into enlarged yali heads. (Though commonly known as monster masks, or kirtimukhas, there can be little doubt that they are intended to represent yalis.) The heads are characterised by bulging eyes and open mouths; curving horns extend upwards beyond the roof ridges. They surmount curved frames packed with rows of miniature warriors, geese with foliated tails, and stalks, leaves and flame-like tufts.

As far as can be judged from weathered remains, virtually the same yali motifs occurred in the plaster sculptures with which palaces were adorned. Courtly buildings at Vijayanagara, such as the Lotus Mahal, preserve traces of yali heads at the apexes of arched openings and niches, and fully modelled yalis as struts beneath the overhanging eaves. Later royal monuments at Penukonda and Chandragiri contain evidence of similar motifs. As for the

highly ornate decoration of the ceremonial halls at Thanjavur and Madurai, this is largely nineteenth-century work based on original models.

BRONZES

Bronzes rival stone carvings in sheer numbers and in variety of iconic forms. Festival images, or utsava murtis, in metal have always been an important aspect of temple art in Southern India, being carried in procession on palanquins, ceremonial chariots and metal-clad, wooden vahanas. Bronze deities are placed inside sanctuaries, where they often replicate stone images, or in adjacent antechambers and subshrines; bronze saints and donor figures are displayed in nearby mandapas and corridors. Because of their portability, many metal sculptures have been removed over the years from their sacred settings and are now in museum collections. In spite of this insistence on portability, not all bronzes are modest in scale; the largest exceed 100 centimetres in height and are testaments to the considerable skills of metalworkers in the region.

Among the most popular bronzes to receive worship as cult icons is the celebrated Nataraja icon. Dancing forms of Shiva are common in most temples dedicated to this god, especially in the Tamil zone where there is often a separate Nataraja shrine within the overall complex. The god appears in the conventional tandava posture known in Southern Indian art from pre-Vijayanagara times: one foot is raised high, the other placed firmly on a writhing dwarf. The movement of the dance is accentuated by the hair flying outwards in curly locks, and the flowing scarves and tassels; the facial expression of the god is detached and otherworldly. Nataraja is surrounded by a frame with flame-like protuberances; its shape varies from a part-circle to an ellipse. Proof that such bronzes were actually cast during this period is provided by a Nataraja image dated to 1511, intended for a temple in the village of Belur in the central part of the Tamil zone (not to be confused with the town of the same name in the Kannada zone, known for its fine Hoysala temple), and now in the Government Museum, Madras. A comparable example in the Museum of Art of the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, may also be assigned to the sixteenth century (Fig. 144). The sharp definition of the eyes, nose and lips, as well as of the jewels and costume, together with a certain rigidity in the pose, are typical features. Among the other forms of Shiva commonly cast in bronze in the sixteenth century are the Somaskanda groups, such as that already described (see Fig. 112).

Ensembles of bronze statues of Rama and Lakshmana, each holding a long bow, together with Sita and Hanuman, the last in respectful attendance, are also prevalent in the metal art of this era. Such sets show elegant figures with sharply cast facial features, pleated costumes and weapons. A fine example of



144 Nataraja, bronze, sixteenth century

Rama in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, dates from the fifteenth or sixteenth century (Fig. 145). It shows the two-armed god pulling the string of the bow. An image of Sita in the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, belonging to a different set of bronzes, demonstrates the ideal of feminine beauty that was realised in sculptural art (Fig. 146). The goddess stands in a



145 Rama, bronze, fifteenth–sixteenth centuries



146 Sita, bronze, sixteenth century

graceful pose with a slight tilt in one hip, the right hand extending outwards to hold a lotus, the left hanging down to one side. The sharply defined curve of the eyebrows and the long nose and full lips are hallmarks of the sixteenth-century style. So too the delicacy of the ornate hairdo and the details of the ear ornaments, necklaces and waistbands.

Metal images of Krishna are also customary at this time, particularly icons of the youthful god dancing on the head of the serpent demon Kaliya. In the example from the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay, Krishna holds up the long serpent tail with one hand (Fig. 147). The fervour of the dance is expressed by the jewels and tassels of the god's costume that are tossed to one side; the facial expression is calm. A related image often cast in bronze is Balakrishna; the dancing naked infant holds a butter-ball in one hand. A unique bronze, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, identified as Yashoda and the infant Krishna, shows an ample-breasted woman tenderly suckling her infant child. The curvaceous modelling, robust limbs and delicately worked hair are unlike anything else known in Southern Indian metal art. The group is of uncertain date, and is here tentatively assigned to the sixteenth century.

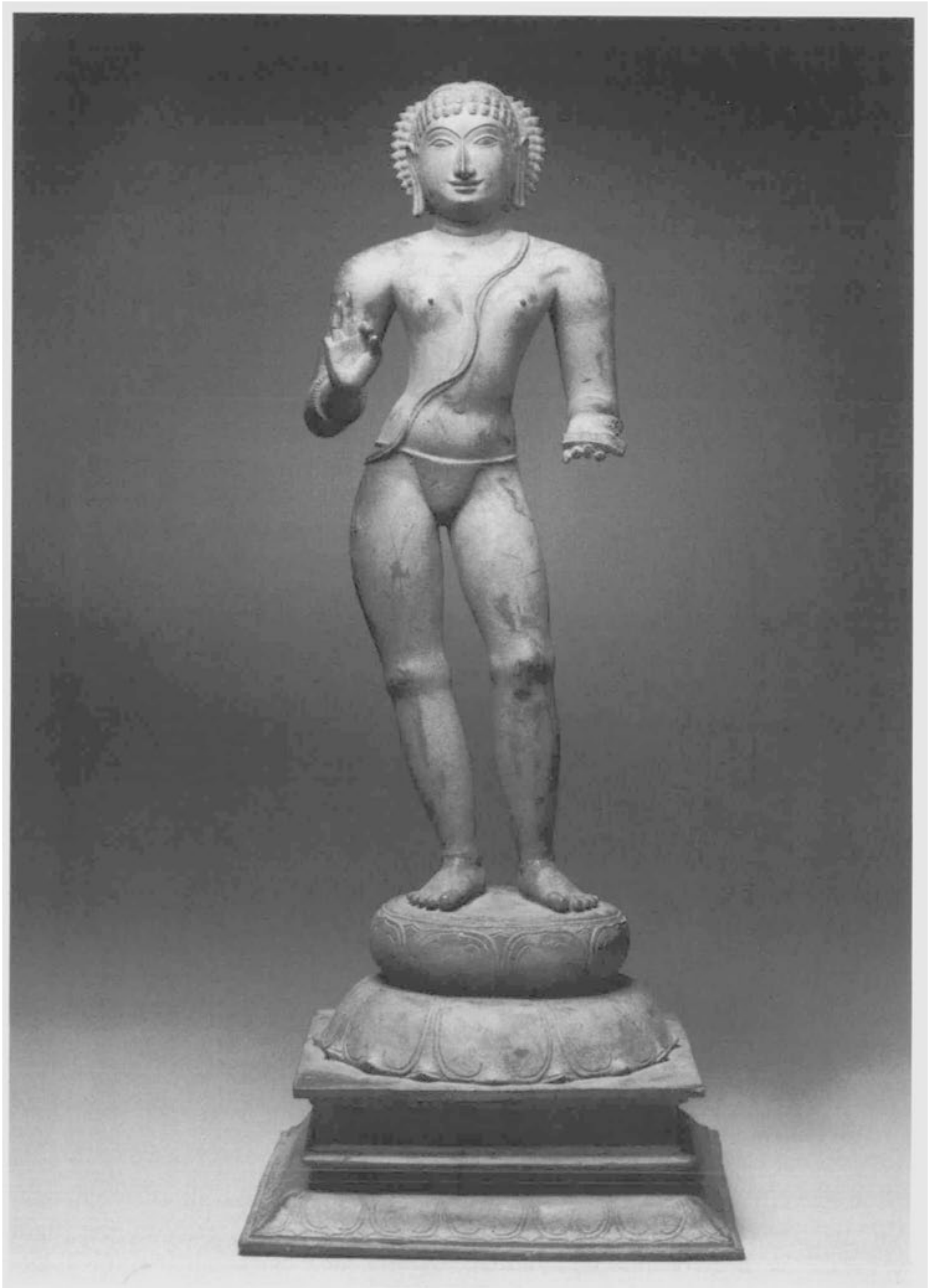
Special importance is accorded to the Narasimha avatara of Vishnu who is repeatedly depicted in metal, generally in a seated yogic posture. The bulging eyes, fangs and lion-like mane indicate the god's vengeful character. In yet another aspect, Vishnu appears with Lakshmi, both riding on Garuda who holds out his hands to support the celestial couple. The widespread popularity of Ganapati, better known in the Tamil zone as Vinayaka or Vighneshvara, accounts for the large number of votive bronzes from the period. They show the god standing, seated or dancing, generally within an ornate frame. The curving elephant trunk, flapping ears and rounded belly with a snake serving as a belt are all typical features.

Saints, ascetics and saviours are among the most popular figures in the temple of these centuries. Standardised sets of bronze saints, especially the sixty-three Nayanmars and the twelve Alvars associated with the worship of Shiva and Vishnu, respectively, are on show in almost every important temple dedicated to these deities in the Tamil zone. Many saints are depicted as youthful figures, attired in loin cloths or short tunics, their eyes wide open in mystic concentration; others appear as armed warriors.

The Nayanmars include Manikkavachakar who holds a palm-leaf manuscript in his left hand, the other being raised in the gesture of explaining the doctrine; his hair is tightly curled. Many accomplished bronzes of this saint appear to have been cast in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, such as that now in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond (Fig. 148). Chandeshvara, known also as Chandesha, is shown with his hands clasped together in devotion, a small axe tucked under his left arm. Jnanasambandar, or simply



147 Krishna dancing on Kaliya, bronze, sixteenth century



148 Manikkavachakar, bronze, fifteenth–sixteenth centuries

Sambandar, appears as a dancing child, almost naked, one hand held outwards in the gesture of explication. Sundarar, yet another Nayanmar, has his left arm bent and raised to lean upon his consort; the other hand holds a curved staff. Despite their ascetic character, such figures are often decked in jewelled headpieces, bracelets, necklaces and waist bands. Female saints are also known. Karaikkal Ammayiar is distinguished by her emaciated body, and by the small cymbals that she holds with which to accompany her devotional hymns. One of the finest examples is the sixteenth-century bronze in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City (Fig. 149).

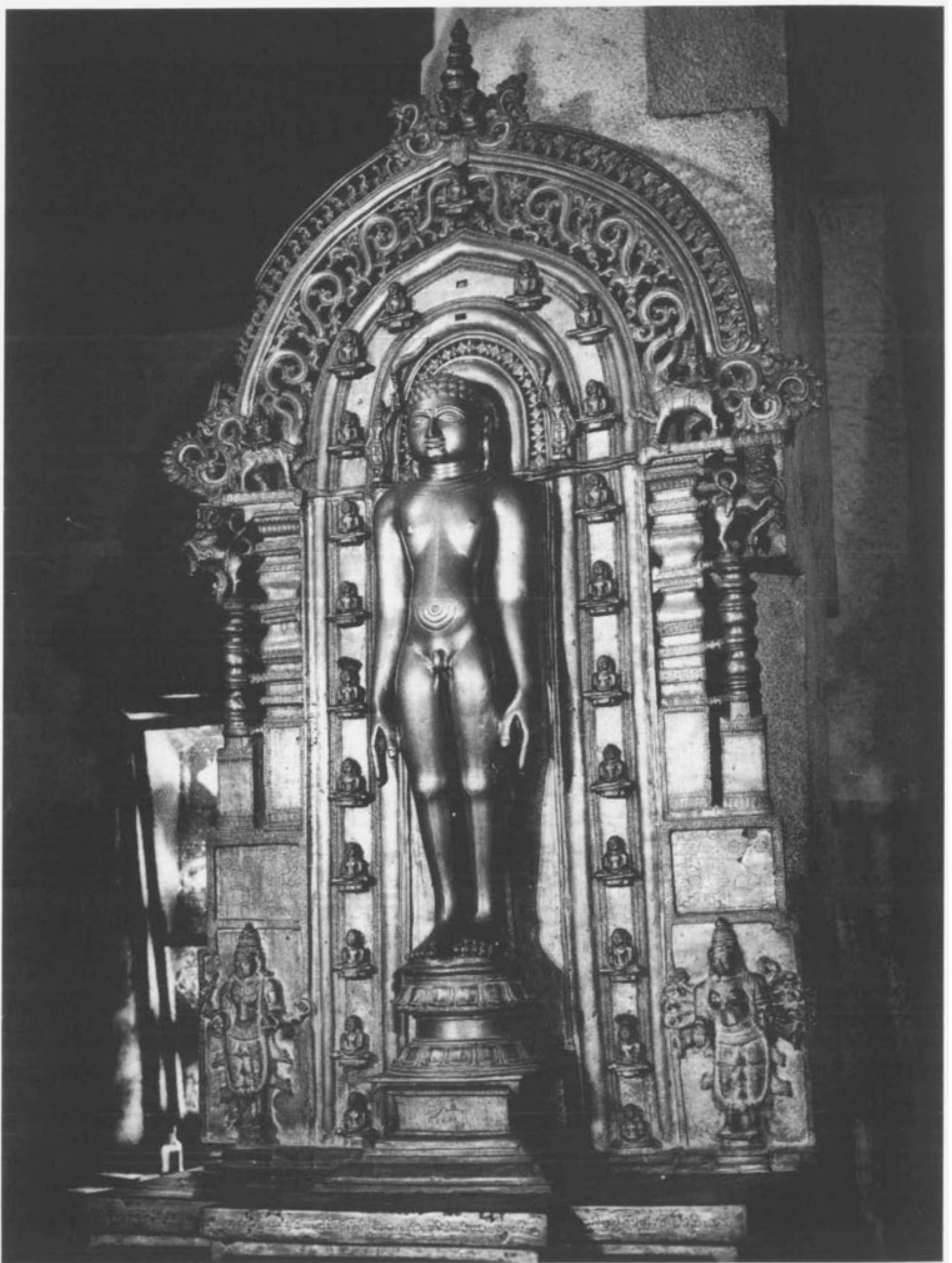
Representations of saintly figures in this era were by no means confined to Hindu cults. Jainism was a dominant force in Kanara. Almost all Jain temples in this district have metal icons of the different Tirthankaras; sometimes a whole set of twenty-four is laid out in a long row within a single shrine. Bronze Tirthankaras conform to long-standing conventions: the typical figure is shown naked, with a fully modelled body, standing stiffly without any visible movement, the long hands hanging down at either side; the head is spherical, the hair arranged in ringlets, and the ears lengthened; distinguishing animals and other emblems are placed beneath the feet. Several fine bronzes from this period are preserved in the matha at Sravana Belgola. They include a delicately modelled Gommata, with creepers winding around his legs. Despite the modest dimensions of this votive sculpture, the figure is powerfully conceived, with swelling shoulders, chest and thighs; the head is rigidly held, the eyes staring straight ahead. Other Tirthankaras, such as those in the Chandranatha Basti at Mudabidri, are set within elaborate brass frames, complete with side pilasters, makaras with foliated tails, and arches with elaborate foliation (Fig. 150). Some seated saviours form part of complicated architectural models representing the cosmic mountain Meru rising in ascending stages, each with miniature figures, and capped with lotus finials.

Buddhism, too, seems to have lingered on in the Tamil zone in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries judging from a small number of bronzes found at Nagapattinam, now on show in the Madras Museum. They show Buddha and various Boddhisattvas, standing or seated within intricately worked frames. While a dependence on earlier prototypes is obvious in these sculptures, the crisply worked details and ornate costumes are hallmarks of the later style.

As in stone carving, metalwork also registers innovatory developments in portraiture. One of the first Vijayanagara emperors to have himself depicted in the act of worship was Krishnaraya. Formal metal portraits of this figure together with two queens, Chinnadevamma and Tirumaladevamma, were installed in an outer corridor of the Venkateshvara shrine at Tirumala to commemorate one of this king's seven visits to the temple (see frontispiece). The statues are actually of copper, each being composed of two hollow sections with side joints; identifying labels are incised on to the right



149 Karaikkal Ammayiar, bronze, sixteenth century



150 Chandranatha, bronze, Chandranatha Basti, Mudabidri, fifteenth century

shoulders. The slender image of Krishnaraya is about 120 centimetres high, somewhat taller than his consorts. The faces of the regal trio have sharply etched eyebrows and eyelids; the noses are long. The king wears a crown in the form of a conical cap with two ribbons; the queens have their hair folded up into elaborate buns. The emperor is naked in his upper body, while his consorts wear transparent shawls that barely conceal their breasts; their lower bodies are richly attired in pleated costumes, waist bands and jewelled tassels. Among the later Aravidu emperors who commissioned portraits of themselves for the Venkateshvara shrine is Venkatapatideva I.

The custom of placing metal statues of donors inside temple shrines continued to be widespread in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Among the Nayaka portraits is a large bronze image of Vijayaraghava (ruled 1633–78), now in the Art Gallery, Thanjavur (Fig. 151). The statue, which is 109 centimetres high, shows the Thanjavur Nayaka plainly attired, his regal status indicated by a cap with an overhanging angled point. Portraits of Hirya Kempe I and his two brothers are installed inside the rock-cut chamber at the core of the Gangadhareshvara shrine in the mountain citadel at Shivaganga. The portrait of Kempe, dated to 1608, shows the Gowda ruler with a conical headdress, slightly tilted to one side, holding a curved sword under his left arm. The simplicity of the image is strikingly effective.

Commanders, too, had themselves represented as temple patrons. Todar Mall, the general responsible for the reconsecration of the principal image of Varadaraja at Kanchipuram after the onslaught of the army of the Arcot Nawab in 1710, is shown within the temple together with his wife and father. The naturalism of the figures and the simplicity of the body ornaments are characteristic of the eighteenth-century style.

IVORIES

Ivory figurines and relief panels from Southern India are only known from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The principal places of ivory manufacture were Mysore, Tiruchirapalli and Madurai, but there may also have been workshops at other sites. Southern Indian ivories generally have rounded and smooth figures that contrast markedly with the sharply etched details of the headdress, jewels and costume. One example is a standing Balakrishna, only 19 centimetres high, possibly from Karnataka, now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The fleshy body of the infant god is adorned with tasselled earrings, jewelled necklaces and a belt of bells. The face stares straight ahead; the two hands hold butter-balls. A similarly styled, infant Krishna in the British Museum, London, shows the god lying on a leaf sucking his toe. The collection of the Art Museum at Srirangam includes ivory statuettes of numerous deities, including dancing Kali. The goddess is carved in remarkable



151 Vijayaraghava Nayaka, bronze, seventeenth century

detail, particularly the weapons held in the ten hands and the swaying necklace, belts and tassels.

Another group of ivories showing gods and goddesses framed within architectural settings may have been incorporated into miniature domestic shrines. The 26-centimetre high sculpture in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, for example, shows reclining Vishnu as Ranganatha inside the Srirangam sanctuary (Fig. 152). A vaulted temple tower, complete with roof tiles and finials, has a standing image of Vishnu in the part-circular frontal projection. A smaller, more intricately carved panel in the Natesan Collection, Bangalore, shows dancing Krishna. It is carved in high relief, particularly the details of the face and hands of the god, as well as the storeys and roof of the diminutive tower. Other panels with mythological topics may also have come from miniature shrines. The marriage of Shiva and Parvati is illustrated in a small relief from the Victoria and Albert Museum (Fig. 153). The standing figures are richly embellished with crowns, earrings and jewels; the patterns and tassels of the costumes are etched in lively detail. The background is completely occupied with attendant figures and the leaves of the ashoka tree. Scenes from the Ramayana are also known. One incomplete panel in a private collection in London shows Rama seated on a throne attended by Lakshmana. Both figures are sculptured in the round, the background being partly cut out. Figurines carved in three dimensions occasionally portray courtly personalities. An ivory in the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India shows a Nayaka, sometimes identified as Tirumala of Madurai. The figure, which is 27 centimetres high, wears a cloth headgear, large earrings and elaborately jewelled costume, while holding a dagger in his left hand. The face is clearly delineated with sharply incised eyes and eyebrows. A pair of figurines in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is similar in style and size. The male holds a dagger in one hand and a flowering sceptre in the other; he wears the cloth headgear and jewelled ornaments familiar from courtly portraits. The costume of the female is deeply encrusted with jewelled necklaces and waist bands.

Embracing couples, gracefully posed in a variety of intimate postures, such as those displayed in the Art Museums at Srirangam and Madurai were almost certainly commissioned by courtly patrons. The males appear as royal figures wearing the usual cloth headgear and jewels; the females are scantily clad, with the breasts fully revealed, as are the arms and thighs. The faces of some males are painted with eyebrows and curled moustaches which complement the deeply incised lines; the noses are long and sharp. In one example from Srirangam, the female offers betel to her lover (Fig. 154). Another group of figurines in the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, is similar in style and date though the subjects are quite different. Here, single males and females wearing tribal costumes composed of leaves hold long bows; one female has a thorn removed from the sole of her foot by a bearded attendant. Europeans also



152 Ranganatha, ivory, seventeenth century

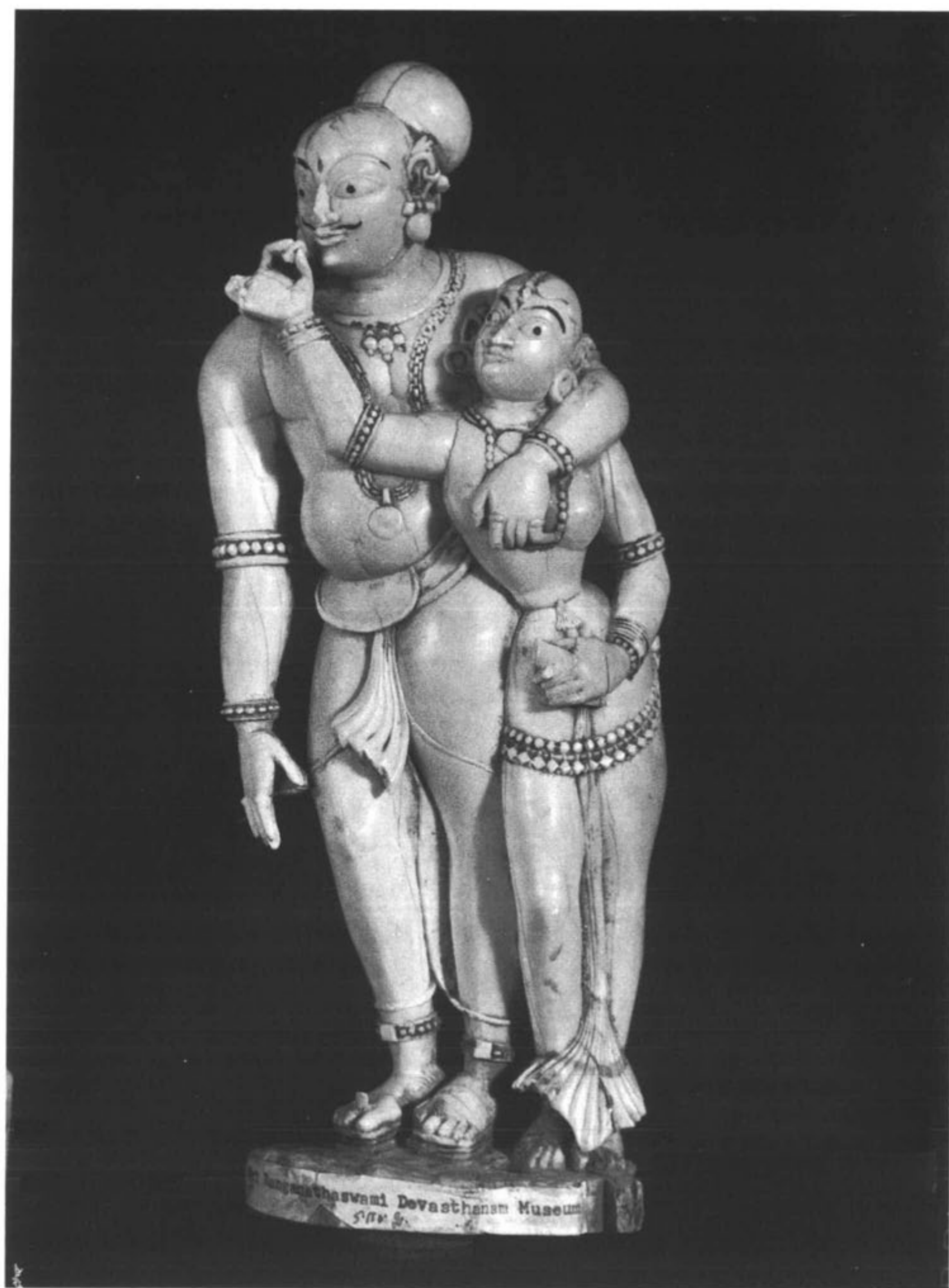
appear in ivory art. One figure from Srirangam wears a top hat and holds a long sword; he is accompanied by a dog.

Many ivories depicting courtly scenes are architectural or furniture fragments. One set of door panels, possibly from Mysore, is now distributed among different collections. The example in the Rietberg Museum, Zurich,



153 Marriage of Shiva and Parvati, ivory, seventeenth century

reveals a courtier seated in a pavilion embracing two female companions (Fig. 155). One female reaches backwards to grasp the head of her lover; to either side are diminutive attendants bearing fly-whisk and fan. The fluidity of the poses and the precisely incised details of the headdresses, jewels and costumes are characteristic of the seventeenth-century style. An incomplete panel in the Musée Guimet, Paris, is just as finely carved but belongs to a different series



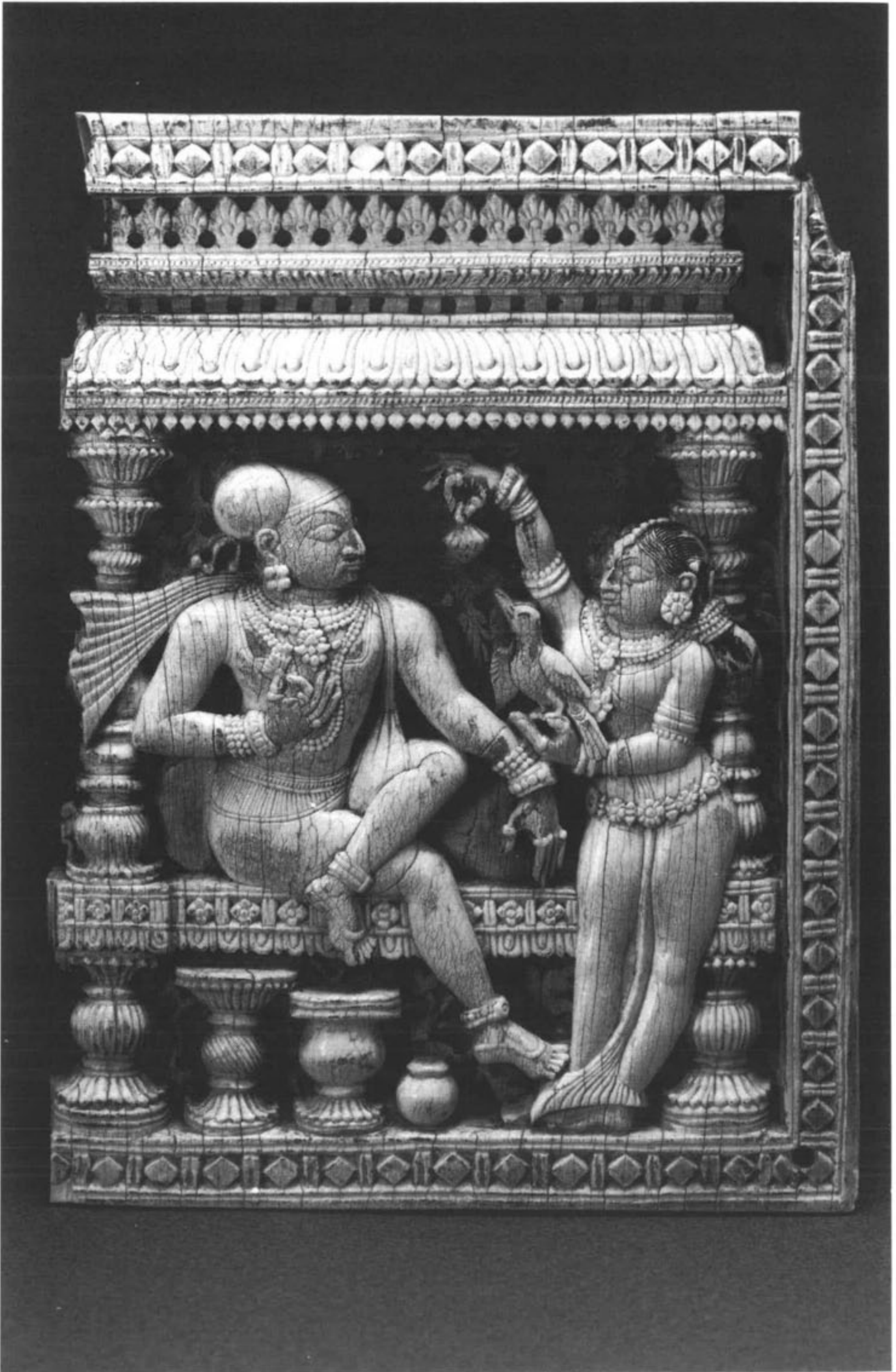
154 Courtly couple, ivory, seventeenth century



155 Embracing couple, ivory, seventeenth century

(Fig. 156). It depicts a female with a small bird and fruit standing before a royal figure seated inside a small pavilion. He wears the familiar cloth headgear and is adorned with elaborate jewels; the end of a fluted shawl springs from one shoulder.

Other depictions of courtly couples come from wooden caskets coated with ivory panels. The finest of these, though now much decayed, is on show at Srirangam. Its panels are carved with embracing couples, both standing and seated, with attendant females and musicians, all on cut-out foliate backgrounds. Meandering leafy stalks with parrots adorn the side panels. A panel from a dismantled casket, now in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, is divided into arched frames filled with entwined couples (Fig. 157). The males mostly



156 Ruler with consort, ivory, seventeenth century



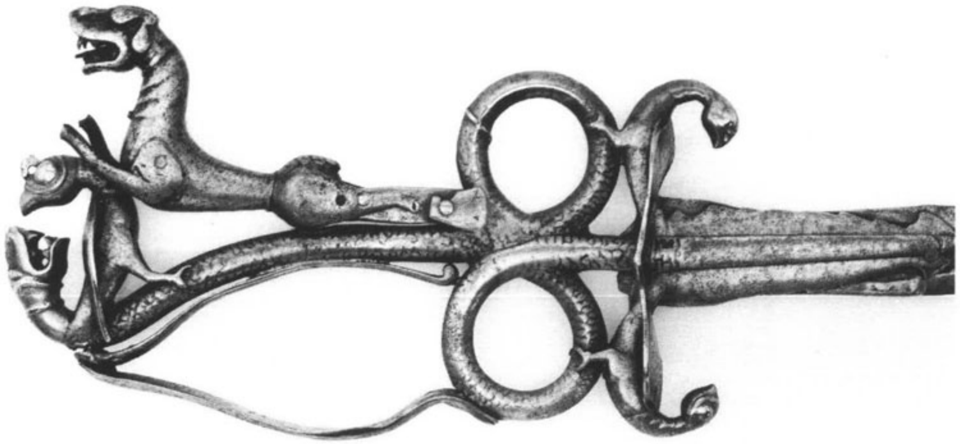
157 Courtly couples, ivory, seventeenth century

have coiled hair, while the women have long tresses. One of the figures holds a dagger and a flowered sceptre.

Courtly love is also the topic of miniature compositions etched on to ivory combs. The example in the Victoria and Albert Museum portrays a couple accompanied by four female attendants bearing flowers and birds. The background is exquisitely decorated with leafy tendrils, and there is a row of geese beneath. The central panel of the comb in the Natesan Collection depicts a male reclining on a cushioned bed within a small pavilion. He strokes the hair of his consort while she massages one of his feet; a curly-tailed cat crouches beneath. Simpler versions of the same subject are known in panels used for the sides of seats or beds. Other furniture pieces are generally restricted to animal and foliate motifs, especially yalis with protruding eyes and horns, open mouths, and bird bodies disintegrating into scrollwork. Seated lions or rearing yalis serve as legs for seats and beds. The ferocious expressions of these beasts and their occasional long snouts recall those of larger stone sculptures.

METALWORK

A wide range of steel and brass objects testifies to the remarkable achievements of metalworkers in Southern India; many of these are sculptures in their own right and deserve to be included here. Without doubt, the finest objects of the period are the chiselled steel weapons used in the formal ceremonies of the Nayaka and Maratha courts. The largest collection comes from the Thanjavur armoury and belongs to the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries; most known examples are divided between museums in Madras and New



158 Animal hilt, steel sword, seventeenth century

York. The Thanjavur weapons include pattar swords, katar daggers and ceremonial ankushas, or elephant goads. While the blades of these weapons are often of European origin, their ingenious handles and hilts are undeniably of local workmanship.

Pattar or gauntlet swords have their hilts chased and sometimes pierced with ornamental designs, especially enlarged heads of fierce elephants and lion-like monsters. Naturalistic animals and birds are sometimes combined together to create strikingly complicated and curvaceously abstract designs, as in the example from the British Museum (Fig. 158). Forearm guards, or vambraces, are decorated with filigree scrollwork containing animals and birds. Additional brilliance is sometimes achieved by gilding in copper or gold. Related to these weapons are long spears with steel heads. They are adorned with animal and bird-like motifs worked into the upper parts of the blades, or with simple but elegant fluting with leaf-like motifs at the ends.

The most elaborately decorated Southern Indian weapons are katar daggers; their protective grips and side-pieces are created out of pierced metal and ornamented with scrollwork and miniature flowers, beasts and birds. Some Thanjavur daggers have additional pieces on the fronts of the hilts. They are decorated with symmetrical arrangements of rearing yalis, peacocks with displayed feathers, and multi-hooded snakes, sometimes curved outwards to give the hilts an almost three-dimensional quality. A katar in the British Museum, supposedly from Thanjavur, is of this type; its central enlarged motif is a fan of fluted elements with diminutive lotuses at the ends; yalis with open mouths adorn the sides. Some daggers have hilts fashioned as animals or as



159 Ankusha, steel with inlays, seventeenth century



160 Tree of life, bronze standard, seventeenth century

combinations of animals, resembling the sword hilts already noted. The example in the David Collection, Copenhagen, for instance, has a gilded iron hilt with entwined lion, serpent, elephant and bird. In contrast, one of the daggers in the National Museum, New Delhi, has a hilt consisting of a single yali head, with open mouth and protruding eyes. A most unusual dagger, now in a private collection in the USA, has its blade intricately chiselled into filigree scrollwork with mythical birds and yali heads; beneath is a miniature figure of Nataraja accompanied by various gods. The ivory handle is also carved in

openwork with intermingling animal and foliate motifs; a beast with a yali head and a feathered body ornaments the base.

Ceremonial ankushas are recognised by the curved spikes that emerge from the blades at the tops of the short shafts. The splendid example in the Musée Guimet has the main shaft inlaid with gold tracery in a delicate pattern of foliate stalks and stems (Fig. 159). An open-mouthed makara head protrudes from the base. Miniature figures of Shiva and Murugan are chiselled on either side of the double blade; the base is flanked by a lion-like beast and a rearing yali, both modelled in three dimensions. The curved spike consists of a filigree of animals and scrollwork. Another example that has recently come to light is of the same type, except that the main shaft is entirely of pierced steel; it is cut with unusual precision into the semblance of different deities in filigree work. Ankushas in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, and in Canberra have symmetrically arranged yalis on the blades. Single beasts chiselled in the round emerge from the animal heads at the bottom of the shafts.

Southern Indian metalwork in these centuries was by no means limited to the production of weapons, as is demonstrated by a superb bronze standard now in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art (Fig. 160). This ritual object probably belongs to the seventeenth century. It is fashioned as an elaborate tree of life, with leafy tendrils fanning out from a central shaft. A coiled cobra and pairs of cows and monkeys adorn the trunk; miniature geese are positioned between the ends of the tendrils. The hole in the base was for a wooden pole on which the standard was mounted when carried in procession. Other metal objects of artistic interest belonging to this era are the architecturally conceived brass portals with part-circular frames, known as prabhavalis, positioned in front of temple doorways. Pilasters with cut-out rearing yalis carry small oil lamps. Makaras and yalis adorn the ends of the frames, while flame-like tufts project from the sides.

CHAPTER 7

PAINTING

No Southern Indian temple or palace in these centuries would have been complete without vividly coloured paintings. They were executed either directly on plastered walls and ceilings to become part of the permanent decor of mandapas, corridors and audience halls, or on large cotton cloths to be displayed temporarily on special occasions. Other paintings were created on a diminutive scale, as is evident from paper manuscripts and portable wooden shrines with miniature illustrations. Whether intended for temples or monasteries, palaces or houses, such paintings were truly popular in appeal, serving as visual accompaniments to written and narrated epic stories.

Only a fraction of the pictorial heritage of this era survives, owing mainly to the fragile nature of the plaster, cotton and paper on to which paintings were made, all of which were adversely affected by light, heat and humidity. Temple ceilings are generally incomplete and in poor condition; some are irrevocably lost. The paintings in the Sveta Vinayaka temple at Tiruvalanjuli, 5 kilometres west of Kumbakonam, were totally removed in the last twenty years. (Knowledge about the Tiruvalanjuli cycle depends entirely on photographs; see Figs. 171 and 172.) With the exception of the residence of the Setupatis at Ramanathapuram, all palace murals have disappeared. That they existed at various royal sites is confirmed by the accounts of foreign visitors. Happily, some paintings have benefited from recent conservation efforts. The ceilings in the Virabhadra temple at Lepakshi have now been restored to their former glory (see Figs. 164 and 165). Cloth is even more fragile than plaster, and hardly a single example of any age has been discovered in temple or palace storerooms. Luckily, quite a few textiles are preserved in museums and private collections, especially outside India, though rarely accompanied by information about the place and date of manufacture. Surviving paintings in manuscripts and albums indicate that paper was in widespread use in Southern India after the middle of the seventeenth century; virtually no surviving evidence exists for painting on palm-leaves.

STYLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

Any understanding of the development of pictorial art in the Vijayanagara and Nayaka periods is hampered by uncertain chronology. The problem of dating is occasionally solved by simply referring to architectural settings. The paintings on the mandapa ceiling of the Shivakamasundari shrine in the

Nataraja complex at Chidambaram, for instance, are likely to be contemporary with the restoration of the monument in 1643 by the Aravidu emperor Shrirangadeva Raya III. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to assume a simple correspondence of dates. Though the mandapa that precedes the Virupaksha sanctuary at Hampi in the sacred centre of the Vijayanagara capital is clearly assigned to the era of Krishnaraya, the paintings that cover its ceiling were added, or at least substantially reworked, only at the end of the eighteenth century (see Fig. 166). Repainting was regularly carried out in the wealthier temples of Southern India; figures and labels were repeatedly retouched, and sometimes entirely new compositions were commissioned to replace earlier work. This process continues today. Seventeenth-century illustrations of the Devi Mahatmya on the mandapa ceiling of the Shivakamasundari shrine at Chidambaram, for instance, were completely removed in 1972 to make room for an entirely new cycle. The ongoing nature of this renewal process means that there is often a disparity between subject matter, which may be an intrinsic part of the temple's original artistic programme, and style, which may exhibit later features in the details of costumes and architecture.

Only in rare instances are the historical circumstances of particular paintings specified. In the ceiling of the corridor that surrounds the Ranganatha shrine at Srirangam, Vijayaranga Chokkanatha of Madurai is shown together with his queens adoring the temple divinity; labels identify the Nayaka, as well as giving the names of the artist and the author of the text on which the composition is based. The same patron, as a prince, in the company of his grandmother, Queen Mangammal, and a military commander, appears in a ceiling composition in the Minkashi-Sundareshvara complex at Madurai. Exactly like ceiling painting, painted cloths and manuscripts also lack precise dates. There are, however, a few exceptions. A scroll in the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art, Hyderabad, has a date equivalent to 1644, making it the earliest known example. A page in the Pandurangi Collection, Bangalore, once part of an elaborately illustrated Mahabharata manuscript, was completed in 1669 according to its colophon, where also the names of the patron and scribe are recorded.

A comparison of paintings on ceilings, cloths and manuscripts reveals a host of common features, certifying to several related pictorial traditions. In spite of obvious differences in scale and technique, there appears to be a fairly limited range of compositional devices and colour schemes. Paintings tend to be divided into narrow strips crowded with figures. Registers are combined in rows, one above the other, with the narrative often proceeding in alternating directions, from left to right, and then right to left. This scheme is frequently encountered in paintings on walls and long ceiling bays, cloth scrolls and manuscript pages. Alternatively, registers are arranged on four sides of a



161 Mandapa ceiling, Shivakamasundari shrine, Nataraja complex, Chidambaram, seventeenth century



162 One of the wives of the sages, story of Bhikshatana, mandapa ceiling, Shivakamasundari shrine, Nataraja complex

square or rectangle, the figures facing away from the middle, a layout usually adopted for central ceiling panels and cloth canopies intended to be viewed from beneath. Other compositions make use of single long panels with continuous narratives, a treatment familiar from ceiling bays and even manuscript pages. Bands and borders separating these registers define the principal panels. They are frequently embellished with labels specifying the principal mythological or historical personages. Bilingual captions are common in the Tamil zone where they appear in both Tamil and Telugu, the latter being one of the preferred languages of the Nayaka courts.

Painting methods on plaster, cloth or paper follow a standardised procedure. Preliminary outlines were made in a light colour, such as yellow or red, and then flat tones were added, the most common being yellow, brown and ochre; accents were created in blue, red and green. White was rarely applied, the plaster, cloth or paper merely being left exposed. Backgrounds were usually filled with flat hues, especially brilliant red or ochre; shading in modulated tones is not known before the eighteenth century. Black outlines and white highlights were sometimes added at the last stage to give compositions an obviously linear quality.

Variations in styles are to some extent regionally determined. The idiom of the Telugu zone in the sixteenth century is exemplified in the Lepakshi paintings (see Figs. 164 and 165). They exhibit a supple linework on an orange-red background, the principal colours being white, green and various brown and sepia tones. Most figures are shown in profile, with projecting eyes, sharp noses and pointed chins; details of costume, jewellery and headdress are clearly indicated by thin brush strokes; a graceful linework gives the figures a certain elegance. Almost exactly the same linear approach and colour schemes are employed in the cloths and manuscripts produced in the region in the seventeenth century, testifying to the development of a distinctive Telugu idiom. Pictorial art in the adjacent Kannada zone displays an outstanding curvaceous quality that accentuates the fleshy and rounded attributes of figures; a nervous linework communicates the energy of certain postures and movements. All these features are evident in the illustrations of the dated Mahabharata manuscript (Fig. 163; see Fig. 193).

The ceiling paintings at Chidambaram typify the Tamil pictorial idiom (Figs. 161 and 162; see Fig. 170). The linework consists of thin strokes of black paint, filled with white, brown and blue-green colours. The faces are often shown in profile, with staring eyes picked out in white. The limbs are curved and arranged somewhat mechanically in a limited range of poses. Paintings on other ceilings as well as on cloths and manuscripts in the same region emphasise the formal stances of figures; they have faces with staring eyes and



163 Women conversing, scene from a Mahabharata manuscript, seventeenth century

long noses, fully rounded limbs and clearly delineated emblems. Paintings in the southern part of the Tamil zone display certain idiosyncrasies, probably owing to the proximity of Kerala. Linework is angular and the colours bold and flat. One curious feature is noted in the murals of the gopura of the Narumbunatha temple at Tiruppudaimarudur, on the bank of the Tambar-apani (see Figs. 178 and 179). Black linework dominates the compositions here, as do the bright red backgrounds which do not always meet the lines, leaving irregular unpainted bands; there is a limited range of colours, mostly red, black, green and some blue.

Intrusive styles derived from Deccan practice, as introduced into Southern India at the end of the seventeenth century by the Marathas, fall outside the scope of this survey; however, it is important to recognise that these imported modes coexisted with indigenous styles. That they also inter-mingled with local tradition is evident from the Maratha-styled details of costumes, particularly those worn by historical personages, sometimes incorporated into pictorial art. Deccan fashions are also revealed in the stylised motifs of floral borders that decorate manuscripts produced at the Maratha court.

TEMPLE CEILINGS: THE TELUGU AND KANNADA ZONES

Most temple paintings in Southern India, especially those belonging to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, are confined to ceilings. They are generally executed on a plaster base composed of lime and sand; this base is bonded to granite slabs by an admixture of jute and hemp. Pigments are applied only after the plaster is dried, polished and covered with a thin lime wash; the paintings are, therefore, not true frescoes. A combination of seed paste, gum arabic and coconut water helps to bind the yellow and red ochres, green earth, carbon and lime that constitute the different pigments.

Very few cycles belonging to the Vijayanagara period can be identified in the Kannada and Telugu zones; they are, however, generous in subject matter. The Lepakshi paintings are of outstanding interest, not only for the range of subjects, but also for the variety of figures, costumes and headdresses. They may be assigned to the sixteenth century, and are possibly contemporary with the renovations of the monument by Virupanna. The ceiling of the inner enclosed mandapa that precedes the main Virabhadra shrine is almost entirely occupied by the principal deity who appears with ten hands holding different weapons; the god's expression is fierce, with staring eyes and protruding fangs. At either side of his feet are the donor figures of Virupanna, his wife and daughter. Yet other donors attend on Shiva and Parvati who are shown seated together above the head of the god. Over the central bay of the verandah, in front of the entrance to the mandapa, Shiva appears as Ardhanari. The god is accompanied by patrons wearing crowns and retinues of sages and courtiers. Other forms of the god are placed at either side.

Paintings on the ceilings of the side aisles in the outer open mandapa at Lepakshi illustrate legendary narratives. On the west is the marriage of Shiva and Parvati, the divine couple being flanked by Dikpalas, sages and attendant women (Fig. 164). On the east is the story of Kirata, a narrative that begins at the west end of the north panel and proceeds in clockwise motion around three sides of the central lotus. The most important scenes are: Indra appearing before Arjuna; Arjuna doing penance; the sages reporting to Shiva; Shiva and Parvati on Nandi; the divine couple disguised as hunters facing a wild boar in a forest setting, the boar charging a sage who is shown fleeing together with antelopes, rabbits and birds; Arjuna performing penance, shooting the boar and, finally, praying to Shiva (Fig. 165). Episodes from the legend of Manuniti fill the ceiling of the northernmost aisle: the princely son of Manuniti riding in a chariot over a calf; the king listening to the story of the accident; the prince being crushed by a chariot while Manuniti and the calf look on; and, finally, Shiva blessing the righteous king.

Fragments of paintings similar to, and presumably contemporary with those at Lepakshi survive on the ceilings of temples at Somapalem and Chippagiri,



164 Attendant women, mandapa ceiling, Virabhadra temple, Lepakshi, sixteenth century



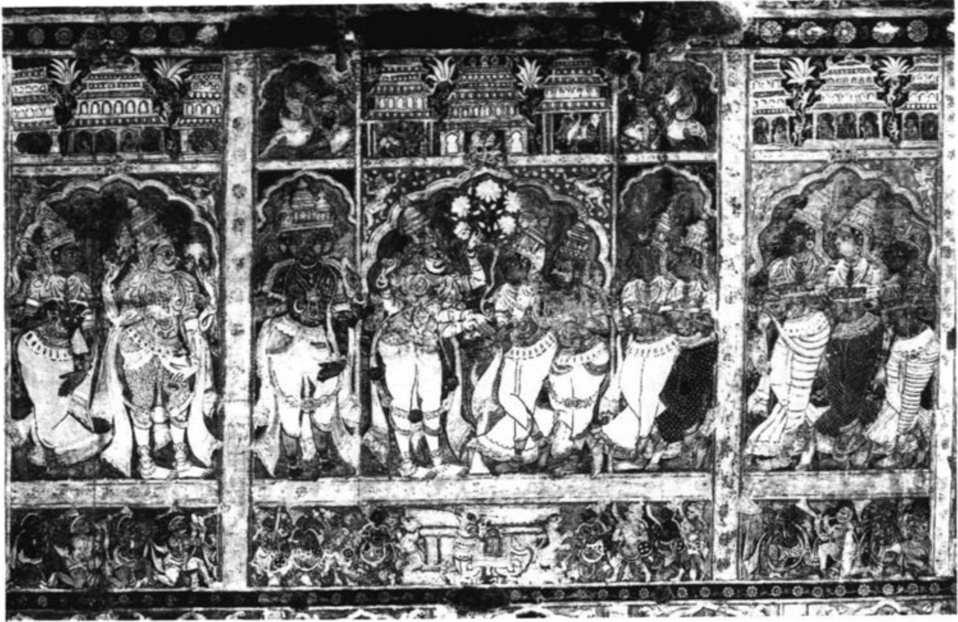
165 Hunting episode from the Kirata story, Virabhadra temple

the latter in the transitional Kannada-Telugu zone, thereby demonstrating the relatively widespread dispersal of this pictorial tradition. The Somapalem ceiling illustrates Ramayana themes, but only a few episodes can be identified, such as Rama bidding farewell to Dasharatha and Kaikeyi, and Rama slaying the ogress Tataka.

Paintings on the mandapa ceiling of the Virupaksha temple at Hampi are usually delegated to the Vijayanagara era; it is argued here that they are much later, at least in style. Details of costumes, headdresses and weapons in several scenes, especially the procession of the sage Vidyaranya and his retinue, indicate that the paintings can be no earlier than the late eighteenth century. They may be compared closely with those on the mandapa ceiling of the Narasimha temple at Sibi in the southern part of the Kannada zone, known to have been founded under Tipu Sultan towards the end of the eighteenth century. They also have much in common with ceiling paintings in the Siddheshvara temple at Holalagundi, another late eighteenth-century structure, situated in a remote village in the transitional Kannada-Telugu zone, some 75 kilometres north-east of the Vijayanagara site.

If the style of the Virupaksha paintings is determined to postdate the period under consideration here, it does not necessarily follow that the subject matter and organisation of the panels are equally late. It is perfectly likely that they were based on earlier compositions, now lost, perhaps contemporary with the construction of the mandapa in the early sixteenth century; for this reason they are discussed here. The Hampi ceiling shows a profusion of deities symmetrically disposed around a central lotus carved in shallow relief. Figures are set within architectural frames created by cusped arches with temple-like towers. At the western end of the ceiling, towards the principal sanctuary, are Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma, together with their consorts. A band of other deities leads to the second set of panels, the largest of which is the marriage scene of Pampa and Virupaksha (Fig. 166). The divine couple is accompanied by gods, attendants and musicians; a flowering tree serves as a background. Dikpalas riding appropriate animals are positioned nearby.

The panels flanking the central lotus in the Hampi ceiling show enlarged figures riding in a chariot. On one side, Manmatha stretches the string of his curved bow to aim an arrow at Shiva; the god sits undisturbed in meditation on a large anthill. On the other side, Shiva holds the bow with a figure of Vishnu as the arrow; he aims at the triple demons, each shown inside a small circle intended to represent a fortress. The ten avataras of Vishnu appear next in a long composition which balances the row of Dikpalas, already noted; the avataras are flanked by animals consisting of interlocking figures. The marriage of Rama and Sita occupies the central panel of the next row. The figures are accompanied by attendants and there is a flowering tree in the background, exactly as in the matrimonial scene of Shiva and Parvati. The



166 Marriage of Pampa and Virupaksha, mandapa ceiling, Virupaksha temple, Hampi, eighteenth century

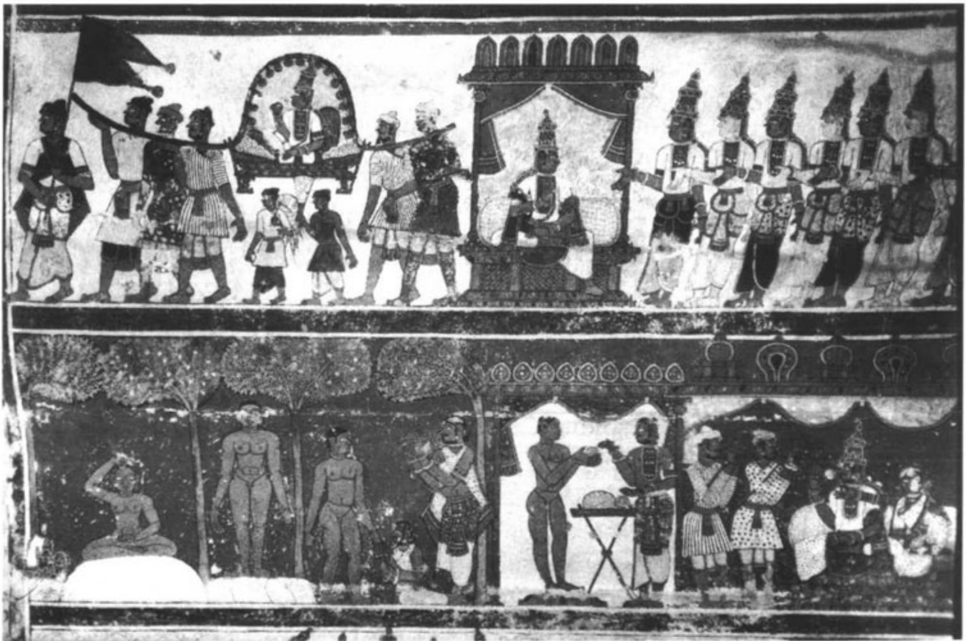
panels on either side show Arjuna and possibly Rama, both with their bows held high shooting arrows. They illustrate the archery contests of the Mahabharata and Ramayana respectively, in which different heroes won the hands of their brides. At the eastern end of the ceiling are two long narrow panels, each depicting a procession crowded with chariots, attendants and animals. The composition with Vidyaranya shows the sage seated in a palanquin proceeding towards the Virupaksha linga, accompanied by soldiers, drummers and men carrying ritual water pots.

The Tenu Malleshvara temple at Hiriyur, in the heart of the Kannada zone, has the ceiling of its open mandapa still partly coated with paintings. The panel over the southern bay depicts sages with matted hair seated in forest settings, complete with hills, flowering trees, monkeys and cattle; other panels show battle scenes. Minutiae of costumes and headdresses as well as the overall style of the paintings suggest an eighteenth-century date. That this pictorial tradition survived into latter times, is demonstrated by the murals in the Jain matha at Sravana Belgola illustrating the lives of various Tirthankaras as well as scenes of religious celebrations. They fall, however, outside the scope of this survey.

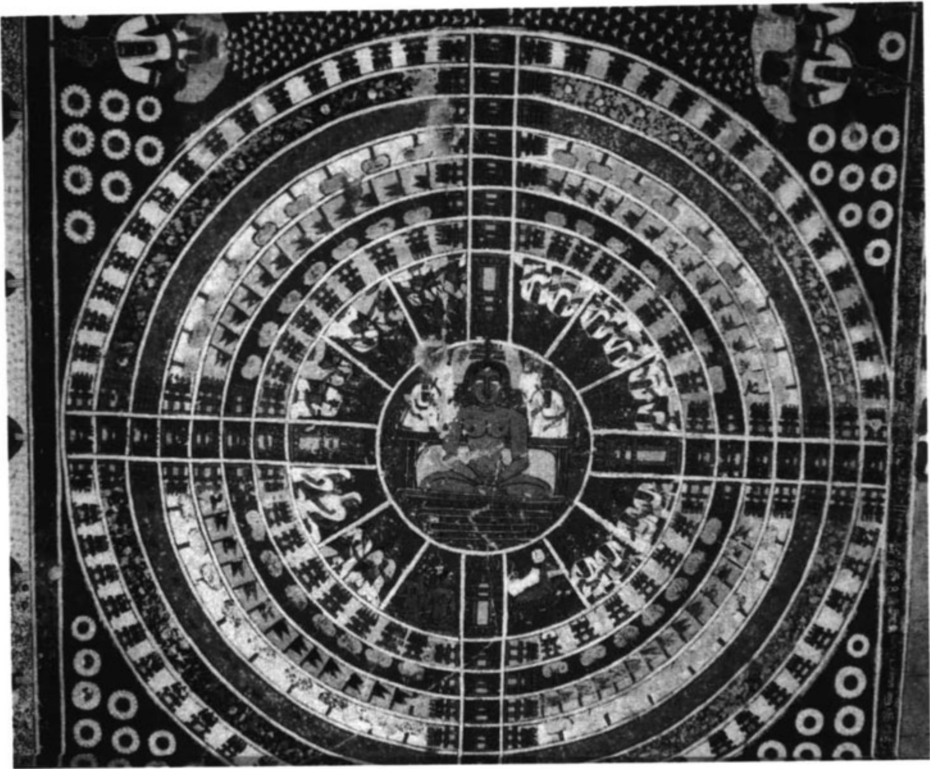
TEMPLE CEILINGS: THE NORTHERN TAMIL ZONE

Painted cycles on temple ceilings in the Tamil zone cannot be arranged in any clear sequence. The earliest examples probably hark back to the second half of the sixteenth century during the Vijayanagara period. They occur in monuments concentrated in the Kaveri Delta region, especially at Tiruvellarai and Tiruvalanjuli. Most other paintings belong to the seventeenth century, providing numerous instances of pictorial art under the Nayakas. Some cycles extend into the eighteenth century, illustrating the survival of Nayaka traditions into later times. In spite of these chronological factors, stylistic distinctions between different cycles are also dependent on regional considerations; here they are discussed according to their locations, moving from north to south within the Tamil zone.

Ceiling fragments within the Varadaraja complex at Kanchipuram are the first to be considered. The swing pavilion in the south-west corner of the third enclosure has its ceiling covered with the sports of Krishna: the youthful god steals the clothes of the gopis, and dances on the hoods of Kaliya. In the mandapa opposite the nearby Narasimha shrine, Rati and Manmatha ride in aerial chariots, shooting a profusion of arrows. The most extensive cycle is preserved on the walls of the passageway to the rear of the Varadaraja



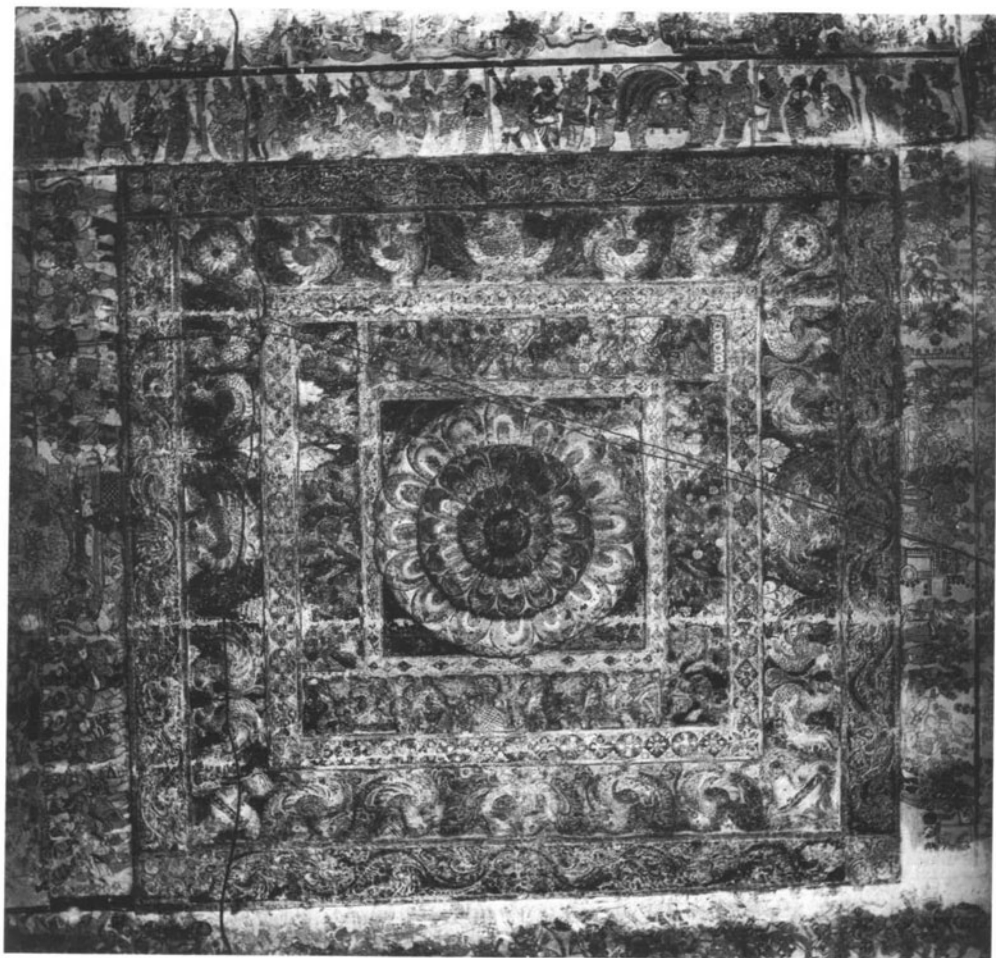
167 Scenes of reception and austerities, mandapa ceiling, Vardhamana temple, Tiruparuttikunram, seventeenth century



168 Samavasarana, or celestial audience chamber, Vardhamana temple

sanctuary. Though darkened by soot and badly damaged, the paintings include a representation of a temple festival. This shows the Garuda vahana being transported together with parasols, fly-whisks and other insignia. A royal devotee on an elephant plays cymbals and sings the glory of the god.

The ceiling of the mandapa extension to the Vardhamana temple at Tiruparuttikunram, on the outskirts of Kanchipuram, is painted with stories of the Jain saviours, particularly Rishabhadeva and Vardhamana in their former lives. The narratives follow a standard pattern, with courtly scenes alternating with forest scenes (Fig. 167). Some panels are entirely occupied by processions of elephants, soldiers, standard-bearers, dancers and musicians. One episode relates the story of Dharanendra, the serpent king, who offered his own kingdom to the relatives of Rishabhadeva so that they would not disturb the meditation of the saviour; the relatives are depicted within their walled cities. Another episode relates how Vardhamana overcame Sangama, a jealous god who assumed the form of a serpent; the saviour is shown standing before a tree around which a serpent is coiled. Such narratives are twice interrupted by samavasaranas, or circular compositions representing celestial audience chambers (Fig. 168). They are each depicted with eight concentric



169 Ramayana episodes and rows of geese, mandapa ceiling, Venugopala Parthasarathi temple, Chengam, seventeenth century

rings containing miniature figures, trees and shrines, with a saviour enthroned in the middle. A similar composition is incompletely preserved in the paintings at Tirumala, some 25 kilometres south of Vellore, in the northern part of the Tamil zone. (This site is not to be confused with Tirumala in the Telugu zone.)

A fine series of paintings covers the mandapa ceiling of the Venugopala Parthasarathi temple at Chengam, 35 kilometres west of Tiruvannamalai. The ceiling of the mandapa preceding the principal shrine is covered with Ramayana scenes laid out in narrow registers, each incident identified with a bilingual caption. Some episodes are drawn from the Telugu version of the story, such as that which shows Hanuman dragging Ravana's queen by the hair. Rows of geese surround the central carved lotus (Fig. 169). The overall compositions are characterised by precise linework and lively postures.



170 Story of Bhikshatana, mandapa ceiling, Shivakamasundari shrine, Nataraja complex, Chidambaram, seventeenth century

The paintings on the ceiling of the Shivakamasundari shrine at Chidambaram have already been referred to (see Fig. 161). One of the most complete sets of illustrations relates the story of Shiva in his ascetic form as Bhikshatana. The god appears here as the naked beggar, his white body contrasting with the black background. He walks with a beautiful, scantily clad woman identified as Mohini (Fig. 170). The following scene shows the sages being seduced by Mohini, while their wives fall under the spell of Bhikshatana (see Fig. 162). In a later episode, the sages tend a sacrificial fire out of which demons are produced, only to be repelled by Shiva.

The long and eventful life of Manikkavachakar, one of the Nayanmars, is

represented in no less than forty panels at Chidambaram. They are mostly devoted to the childhood of the saint and his exploits as a youth in the service of the Pandya king. A vivid episode illustrates Shiva's revenge on the king for punishing Manikkavachakar: Shiva disguised as a trader delivers a pack of jackals transformed into horses to the king's stables, the jackals pounce on the king's horses, the saint stands on the bank of a river with a stone on his back, Shiva then makes the river overflow its banks with people swimming frantically through the water. In the narrative of Cheraman Perumal, another of the Nayanmars, the hero is shown riding an elephant accompanied by soldiers on the way to Chidambaram to worship Shiva. A further panel illustrates the story of Upamanyu. The infant devotee stands in front of Shiva's shrine; the hand of the god emerging from the linga instructs Parvati to feed the hungry child.

TEMPLE CEILINGS AND WALLS: THE CENTRAL TAMIL ZONE

By far the largest number of surviving ceiling paintings in the Tamil zone is preserved in the temples of the Kaveri Delta region. The Ramayana composition in the mandapa in front of the principal shrine of the Pundarika temple at Tiruvellarai, 25 kilometres north-west of Tiruchirapalli, is assigned to the Vijayanagara era, as has already been noted; it is no longer extant, and can now only be studied through photographs. The narrative concentrates on scenes from the Kishkindha Kanda portraying Rama in various heroic acts: he kicks the buffalo carcass of Dundubi; he shoots an arrow through seven palm trees; he then rests in the shade of a tree behind which is a hill covered with monkeys. The fight between Vali and Sugriva is witnessed by Rama and by Vali's wife, Tara, seated on a swing inside the palace. The story continues in the panel of the second bay where Vali is shown fighting, falling, clutching the arrow by which he is shot, and then cremated. The coronation of Sugriva follows; he is shown seated on a throne being blessed by Lakshmana in the company of priests and women. In the first scene that survives of the ceiling panel of the third bay, Hanuman and the monkeys meet the bird Sampati, brother of Jatayu; the monkeys are in animated conversation, presumably plotting the campaign to Lanka. The last scene to be preserved shows Hanuman leaping across the ocean which is shown teeming with marine life.

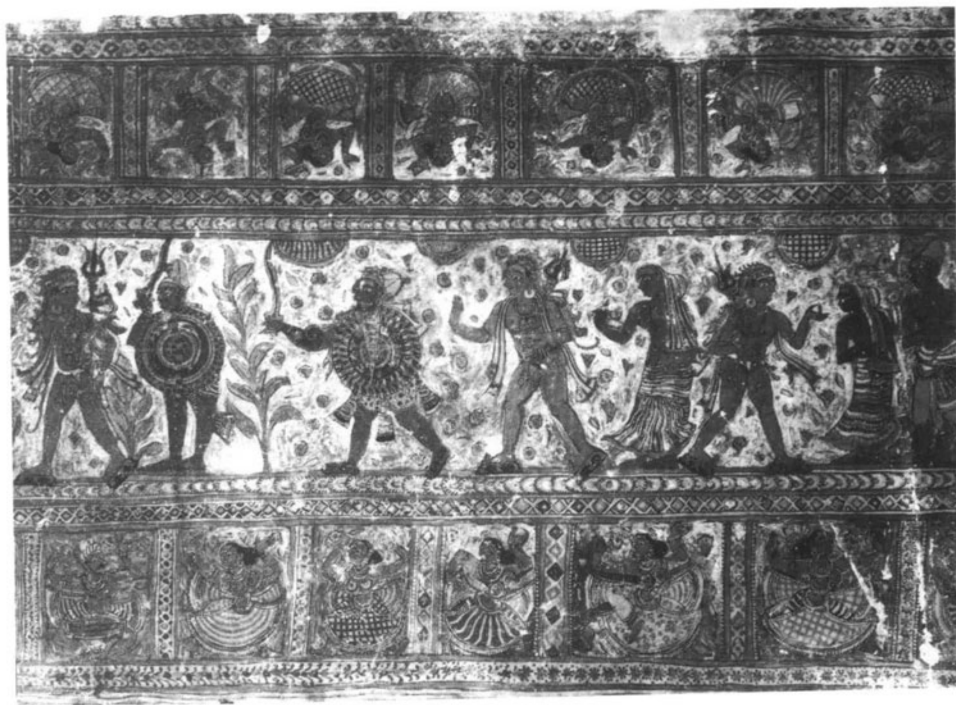
The ceiling paintings at Tiruvalanjuli must have been among the finest examples of sixteenth-century pictorial art in the Tamil zone. They originally covered four long panels in the mandapa of the Kapardishvara shrine within the Sveta Vinayaka complex; three more panels were located in the surrounding passageway. Independent scenes depicting different aspects of Shiva are combined in the first panel of the mandapa ceiling: they include Bhairava releasing Brahma from the imprisonment of Skanda, and Nataraja



171 Shiva and Parvati on Nandi with sages, mandapa ceiing, Kapardishvara shrine, Sveta Vinayaka temple, Tiruvalanjuli, sixteenth century

with ten arms dancing to the accompaniment of a dwarf drummer; Parvati and sages are in attendance. Between the Brahma story and Nataraja there is a symmetrical lotus design with a small figure of Surya in the middle; female figures fill the petals. Part of another scene shows a group of human devotees, possibly temple donors; the men wear turbans while the single woman is lavishly dressed.

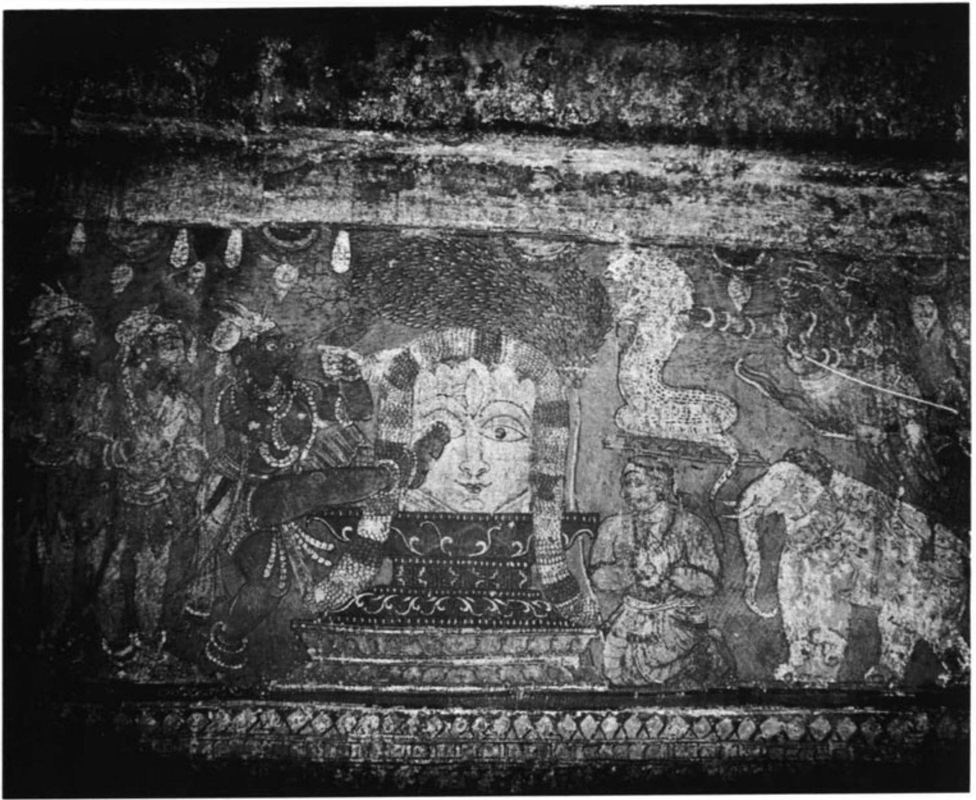
The paintings in the second panel of the mandapa ceiling at Tiruvalanjuli were the best preserved. Other forms of Shiva appear here: the god is seated in his mountain home playing the vina, he rides with Parvati on Nandi (Fig. 171), he dances in the presence of Brahma and Vishnu, and he displays the skin of the elephant demon he has slain to Indra and the Dikpalas. The only depictions of Vishnu occur in the third panel where three scenes are devoted to illustrating the rescue of Gajendra: the elephant offers flowers to Vishnu who is seated on a throne with Shri and Bhudevi; the god then appears before the elephant who appears trapped by the jaws of a crocodile; finally, the elephant raises its trunk in homage to the god. The fourth panel of the mandapa ceiling



172 Story of Iyarpakai, Sveta Vinayaka temple

illustrates the story of Iyarpakai, one of the Nayanmars. The story proceeds from right to left, beginning with Iyarpakai and his wife receiving three mendicants, one of whom asks for Iyarpakai's wife. The wife stands before the mendicant, and is then shown travelling with him in the forest; Iyarkapai wields a sword and shield in protection (Fig. 172). They are attacked by outraged relatives whom Iyarpakai kills without hesitation; he then continues to escort the mendicant with his wife.

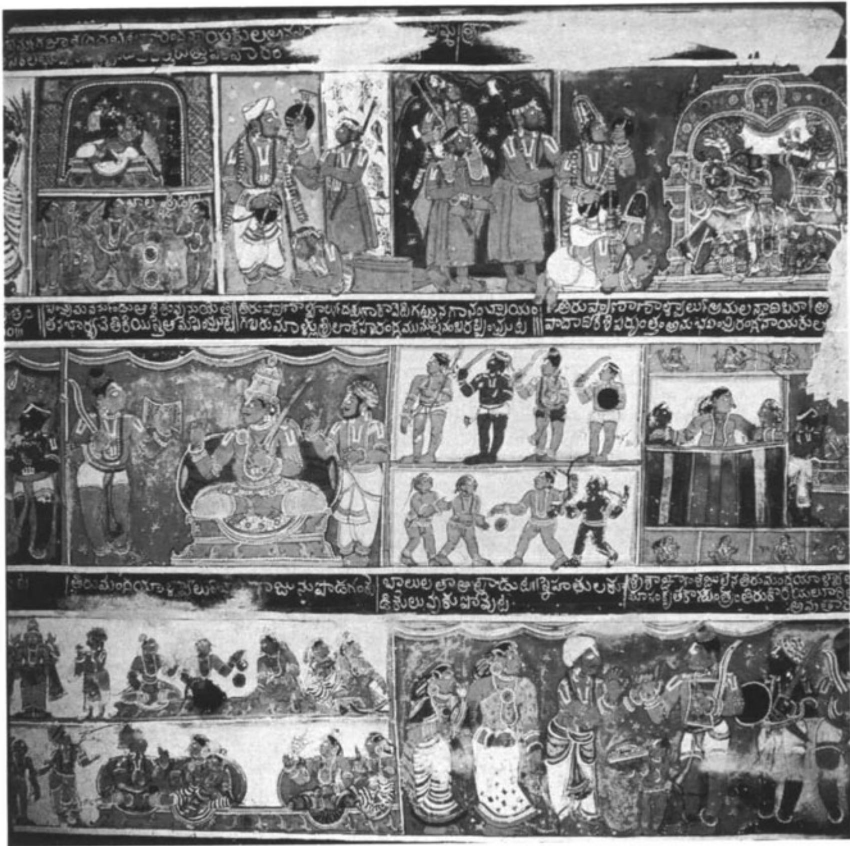
The ceiling panel of the inner gopura of the Tenupurishvara temple at Pattisvaram, 2 kilometres south of Tiruvalanjuli, represents the story of Sambandar, another of the Nayanmars. The sage is supposed to have braved the scorching sun in order to worship at this particular temple. The scene shows the infant saint standing before Shiva and Parvati seated on Nandi; ganas hold a canopy at either side. A major composition here portrays a votive image of Nataraja, complete with part-circular frame and attendant goddess. Other local legends occur on the passageway wall opposite the linga shrine. Though fragmentary, these illustrate the miracle of the childless king Chitrasena. The first scene shows a sage advising the seated king to worship at the Pattisvaram shrine; in the second scene the king fondly holds one of his newly born sons.



173 Kannappa, passageway wall, linga shrine, Brihadishvara temple, Thanjavur, seventeenth century

If the Tiruvellarai, Tiruvalanjuli and Pattisvaram cycles epitomise the Vijayanagara idiom, then other examples in this region may be taken as representative of the Nayaka manner. The paintings in the passageway surrounding the sanctuary of the Brihadishvara monument at Thanjavur are less well known than the Chola-period murals which they partly obscure; the later series are sometimes associated with the reign of Vijayaraghava in the middle of the seventeenth century. They include scenes from the lives of the saints, in particular Kannappa, who is shown plucking out his eye and feeling with his foot for the eye of Shiva (Fig. 173). The name of the artist of this composition is given above. Other major compositions show the churning of the cosmic ocean and the most important aspects of Shiva and Devi. One panel shows Devi and Vishnu annihilating a number of demons. Some scenes appear to be historical in subject, such as the worship of the linga by courtly devotees.

Several ceiling segments are preserved within the Ranganatha complex at Srirangam. One fragment in the gopura on the south side of the sixth



174 Ranganatha and scenes from Vaishnava mythology, corridor ceiling, Ranganatha temple, Srirangam, seventeenth century

enclosure illustrates temple processions with different animal vahanas accompanied by temple dignitaries and crowds of worshippers. The colours, though faded, are mostly brown and grey. More complete is the composition in a pavilion incorporated into the Rangavilasa Mandapa in the fourth enclosure. The paintings inside this small structure are arranged around a central carved lotus. The outer panels illustrate the Ramayana: successive scenes depict the sacrifice of Dasharatha, the birth of Rama, his youthful exploits, the lessons of the sages, and the marriage of Rama and Sita. The inner panels show Kama and Rati riding on birds in the company of celestials shooting arrows at each other. The figures are all painted in white, green and other colours on a bright red background.

Further evidence of painting at Srirangam occurs in the ceiling of the corridor that wraps around the focal shrine. Local legends pertaining to Ranganatha as well as scenes from the life of Krishna are the principal subjects (Fig. 174). They are organised into compartments, each bearing a Telugu label.



175 Tyagaraja being carried in procession, mandapa ceiling, Tyagaraja complex, Tiruvarur, seventeenth century

At the end of the cycle, as noted earlier, is a panel depicting Vijayaranga Chokkanatha.

Another extensive group of paintings is found at the eastern extremity of the Kaveri Delta, in the Tyagaraja temple at Tiruvarur, 25 kilometres from the Bay of Bengal. Paintings survive on the ceiling of the thousand-columned hall added in the seventeenth century to this largely Chola-period foundation. They are unmatched in the pictorial art of the region for their animated compositions and lively detail. A complete set of panels is devoted to the story of Muchukunda, the saint who travels to Indra's heaven to request the god to let him bring the image of Tyagaraja down to earth. Muchukunda is portrayed riding majestically in procession on an elephant; he is received with great pomp by Indra at the entrance to his heavenly city. Celestial nymphs scatter petals from the balconies; they wave lamps and offer garlands. Before complying with Muchukunda's request, Indra tests him by displaying seven identical images of Tyagaraja all of which are chosen by the hero. The images are then carried down to earth in palanquins (Fig. 175). Monkeys swing through the coconut trees behind the palace, while crowds of women witness these miraculous events (Fig. 176). Fireworks honour the consecration of



176 Female spectators, Tyagaraja complex

Tyagaraja. Sprays of blazing sparks soaring high into the sky illuminate trees and creepers, finally scattering over spectators holding parasols and standards.

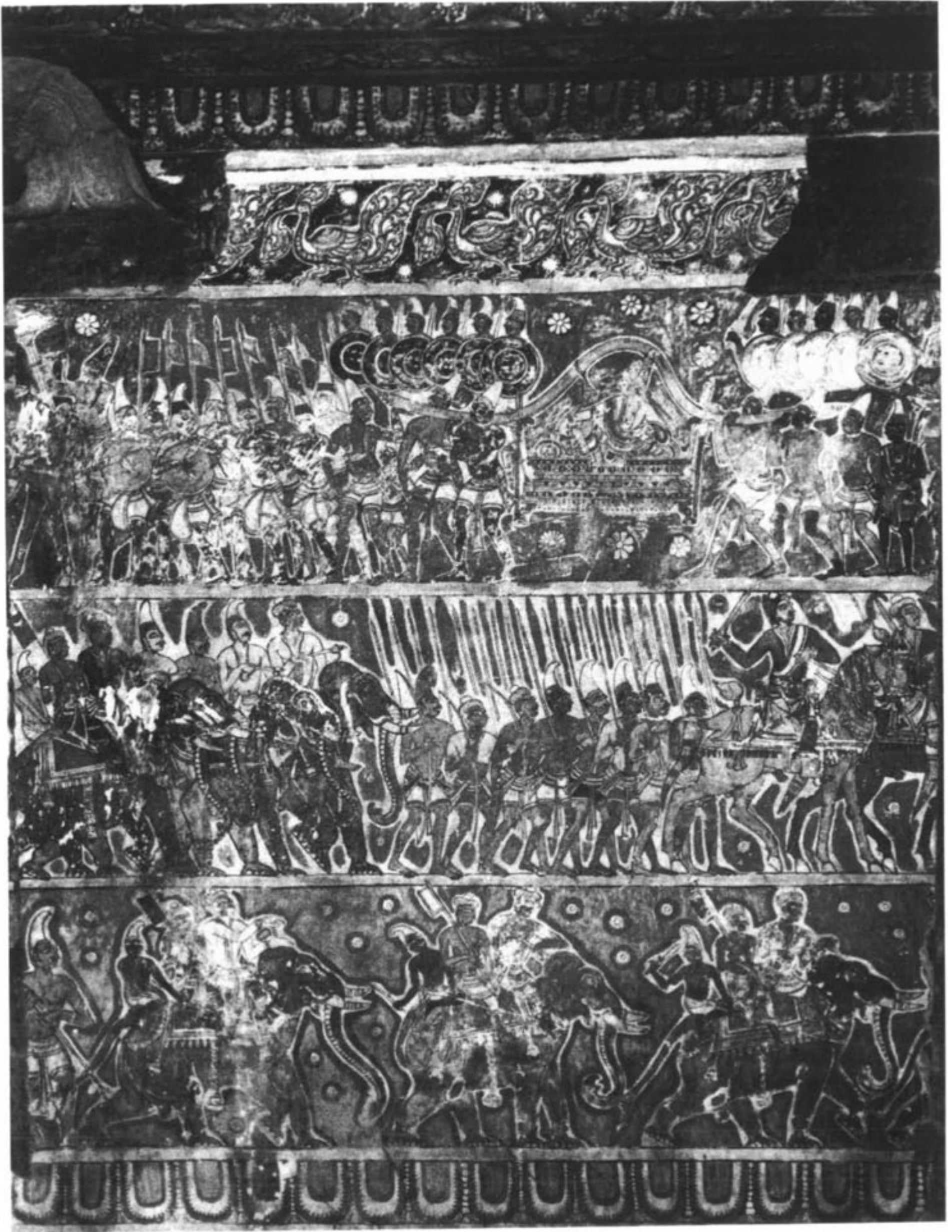
CEILINGS AND MURALS: THE SOUTHERN TAMIL ZONE

Temples in the southern part of the Tamil zone testify to a pictorial tradition that flourished during the Nayaka period and later. Only fragments of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century paintings survive within the great complex at Madurai. One portion is found in the small portico on the western side of the Potramarai Kulam. As already observed, it depicts the marriage of Sundareshvara and Minakshi attended by Vijayaranga Chokkanatha and Mangammal. The painting is executed on a vivid red background, with delicate black linework and large areas of white, ochre and green. The celestial couple is seated inside an architectural frame with a flowering tree in the background.

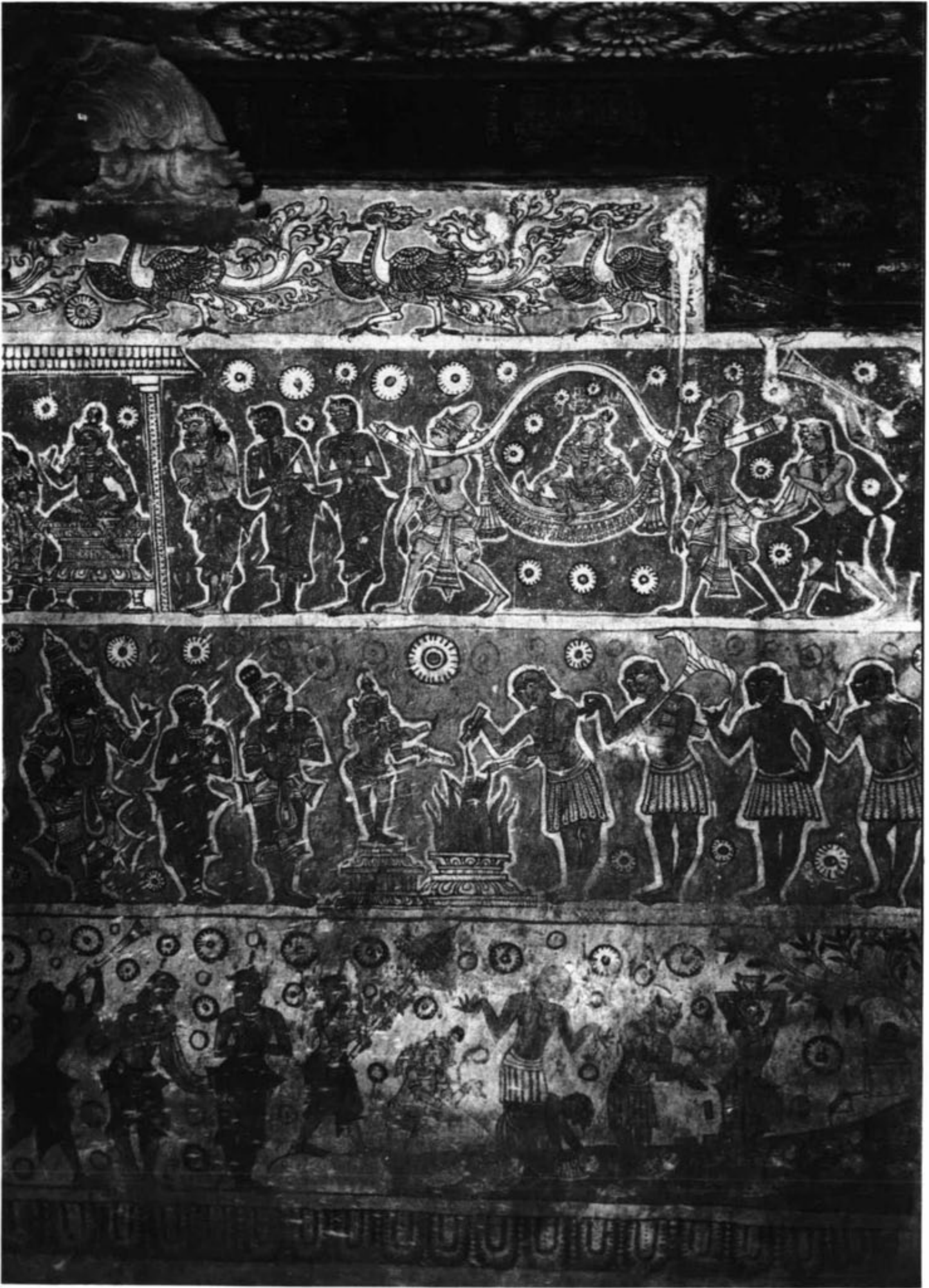
An extensive Ramayana cycle survives on the ceiling of the Vasanta Mandapa outside the main complex at Alagarkoil (Fig. 177). Ramayana scenes arranged in continuous strips are divided by black bands with white Tamil script. The best-preserved paintings occur on the ceiling of the central pavilion. The scenes proceed in clockwise direction from the sacrifice of



177 Ramayana scenes, mandapa ceiling, Alagar Perumal temple, Alagarkoil, seventeenth century



178 Military parades, interior wall of gopura, Narumbunatha temple, Tiruppudaimarudur, eighteenth century



179 Procession and fire sacrifice, Narumbunatha temple

Dasharatha, and the birth of Rama and his three brothers, to the exploits of the youthful Rama and the departure of the wedding parties. The large panel in the middle shows Vishnu with Lakshmi and Bhudevi. The paintings are characterised by green and brown hues, with thick black or white outlines; they may be assigned to the early eighteenth century.

Another complete Ramayana covers the ceiling of the long colonnade that serves as a ceremonial approach to the Gokarneshvara temple on the outskirts of Pudukkottai. The story begins with a scene in which the gods seek the help of Vishnu; it ends with the episode of Rama and Lakshmana giving away their belongings before leaving for the forest. The central panel is devoted to the marriages of Dasharatha's four sons. The narrative continues along the side corridor, but there has been much overpainting; among those scenes that retain something of their original quality are those showing Hanuman setting Lanka afire, with a fine aerial view of the city.

The recent discovery of a remarkably well-preserved set of murals inside the tower of the principal gopura of the Tiruppudaimarudur temple has greatly increased the known repertory of pictorial art in the southern part of the Tamil zone. A large variety of myths, legends and divinities is painted on to the plaster walls of each of the ascending storeys. The first upper level of the tower has Ramayana episodes, including Rama and Ravana facing each other at either side of the west window. The Kirata story appears nearby, also the legend of Sambandar converting the Pandya king. The second upper level has illustrations of a number of deities, including Narasimha and Nataraja. The remainder of the scenes here are of a historical nature: a ship filled with merchants; courtly receptions; parades of armed soldiers, war-horses and elephants; priestly sacrifices (Figs. 178 and 179). Paintings in the third upper level are devoted to the avataras of Vishnu; several enlarged compositions show Vishnu reclining on the serpent, and Rama carried by Hanuman. Subjects derived from the mythology of Shiva cover the walls of the fourth upper level; here, too, bearded sages worship lingas in different shrines.

As already noted, the eighteenth-century palace at Ramanathapuram has the unique privilege of being the only royal building in the Tamil zone to preserve its paintings. (That royal residences were adorned with murals in neighbouring Kerala at this time is demonstrated at Padmanabhapuram, Krishnapuram and Cochin.) The Ramanathapuram murals cloak the walls of the entrance room, audience hall and royal sleeping chambers. The clear linework and vivid tones of red, ochre and blue are typical of the last phase of the Tamil pictorial style. Equally characteristic are details such as the flowered garlands hanging from arches, and the prevalence of facial profiles with only one eye visible; identifying labels are provided in both Tamil and Telugu. The subjects include Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhagavata cycles, all of which proceed in horizontal bands around the walls. There are also depictions of different linga



180 Royal hunting scene, wall of bed-chamber, palace, Ramanathapuram, eighteenth century

and goddess shrines which were intended to refer to actual holy spots within the Setupati territories.

Royal topics form an important part of the Ramanathapuram paintings. In the audience hall they depict formal receptions with seated Setupati kings, one of which is specified as Muttu Vijaya Raghunatha Tevan. Battle scenes include animated lines of soldiers brandishing various weapons, and even a British officer firing a cannon. Walls and the undersides of arches in the sleeping chamber are covered with representations of the royal figure: standing together with his women who hold mirrors, fans and standards; listening to an exposition of sacred texts; sitting in a European chair holding the holy sceptre of Rajarajeshvari, the family goddess; reclining on a cushion in full military attire, holding a long sword; being entertained by female dancers and singers; receiving gifts from Portuguese Jesuits; holding up his bow as part of a hunting expedition, while kissing his favourite consort (Fig. 180).

Throughout these and other similar scenes at Ramanathapuram, the ruler and his courtiers appear in a variety of costumes, including Mughal-style shawls and turbans, no doubt in response to the growing influence of the Nawabs at Arcot. Mostly, however, the Setupati king is shown in traditional dress, generally a simple costume with the chest bare, wearing strings of pearls. His hair hangs

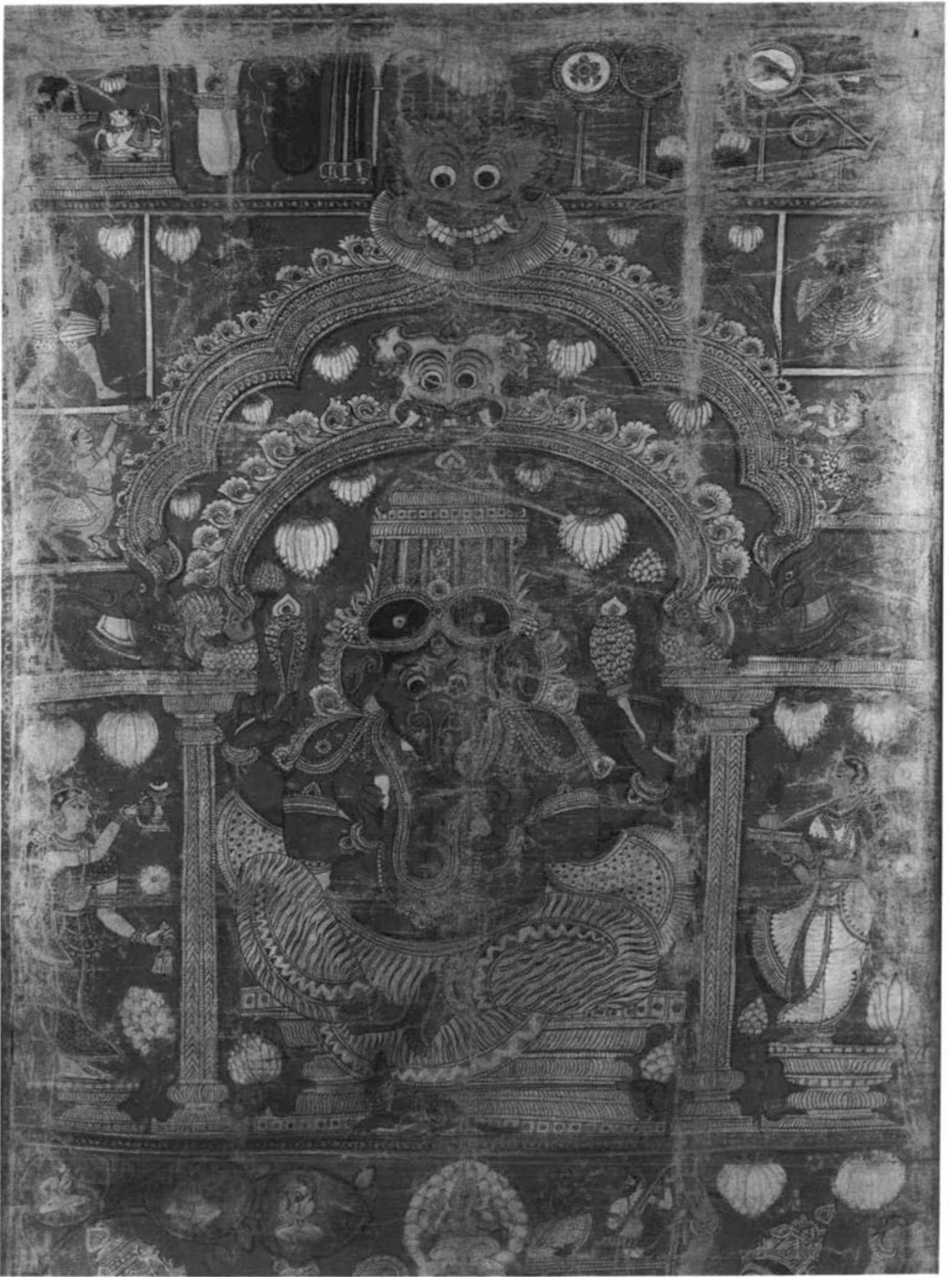


181 Woman carried in a palanquin, palace, Ramanathapuram

down, or he wears a conical crown. Attendant women are richly decked with earrings, necklaces, bangles and anklets. The hair is gathered into buns that fall to one side over the shoulder; feathered ornaments protrude from the back. Saris are richly patterned with floral and geometric designs. They attend on the ruler and are sometimes carried in palanquins (Fig. 181).

SCROLLS

Painted cloths unrolled as long narrow scrolls form an important part of the pictorial legacy of Southern India; even so, only a few examples belonging to these centuries have come to light. The generous dimensions of these scrolls, some of which approach 850 centimetres in length, and their dense compositions, with figures arranged in narrow horizontal bands, compare closely with temple ceilings in scale, subject and composition; they are even painted with the same pigments, though on a cotton base. Scrolls, however, were viewed in a quite different way: they were unrolled in sections to display several panels at a time, usually to accompany the spoken or sung recitation of a particular legend. Exactly like ceilings, scrolls have an animated linework in black or dark brown delineating figures and border designs. Flat reds and ochres are used for backgrounds, the most common infill colours being dark



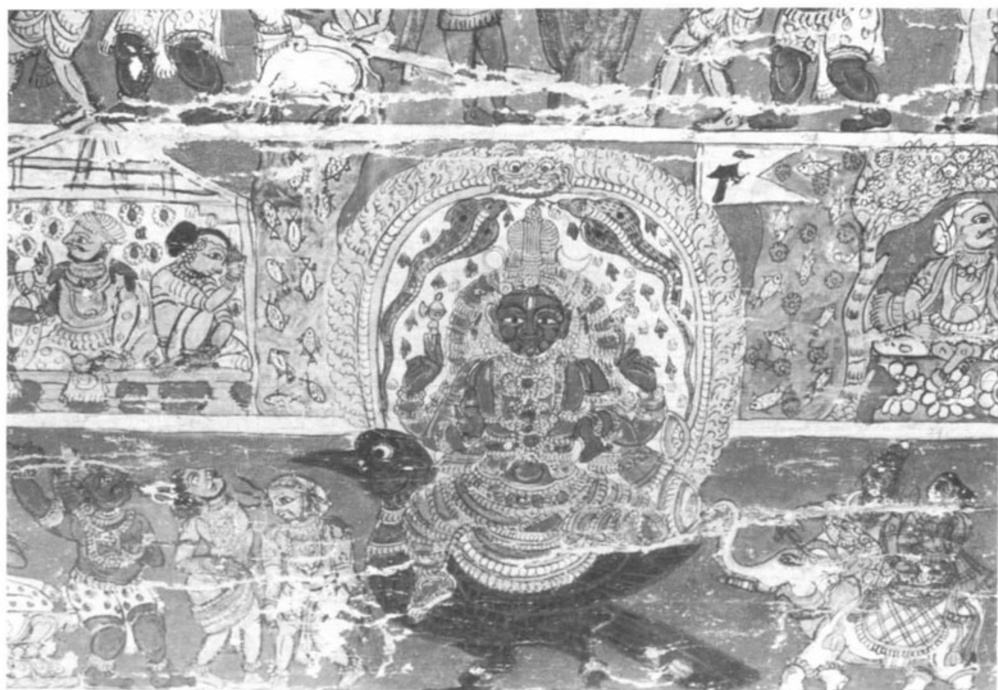
182 Seated Ganapati, cloth scroll, eighteenth century

blue, green, yellow and white. In this respect the scrolls are stylistically akin to temple paintings in the northern and central parts of the Tamil zone; many, however, are attributed to the adjacent Telugu zone.

The earliest dated scroll is the mid-seventeenth-century example in the Mittal Museum of Indian Art, already mentioned. The subject depicted here is the legend of the sage Bhavana who was created by Markandeya to weave celestial garments for the gods. The cloth opens with an enlarged panel showing Ganapati seated within a cusped frame, attendant ladies on either side; flags, standards and banners lend a royal dimension to this opening scene. Then follows a sequence of twenty-two narrative panels, each crowded with heroes and heavenly figures adorned with towering crowns and lavish jewellery.

A shorter, but similar scroll, now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, also begins with an enlarged panel of Ganapati framed by a double arch (Fig. 182). Most of the scenes that follow show bearded sages adoring different divinities seated on pedestals. There are at least two representations of Ranganatha reclining on Shesha. While the linework of this scroll recalls that of the Hyderabad example, it is likely to be somewhat later in date.

A painted cotton scroll in the National Museum, Copenhagen, may be



183 Shiva riding on the crow, cloth scroll, eighteenth century

assigned to the early eighteenth century. It measures only about 200 centimetres long, but is characteristically divided into strips packed with sages and gods, many in procession. One panel is dominated by the four-armed figure of Shiva riding on a crow (Fig. 183). This unusual aspect of the god is, no doubt, associated with a particular local shrine; a crow motif is even repeated on a flag flying to one side. The colour scheme is dominated by the vivid black linework on a solid red background.

HANGINGS AND CANOPIES

By far the largest group of painted cloths from Southern India are the hangings and canopies that were displayed in temples and palaces. Like scrolls, they too are of ample dimensions, some being more than 300 centimetres square. Unlike scrolls, however, they were produced according to a complicated process known as kalamkari; this involved a combination of printing and dyeing together with direct painting. The resulting textiles are characterised by vivid designs and enduring colours. Such kalamkaris have long been admired, both in India and abroad. They were even shipped in large quantities to Europe and other parts of Asia in the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries. Some, in fact, were expressly produced for overseas markets and incorporated motifs intended to please European and South-East Asian clients. Some of the most interesting of these cloths present large-scale compositions with Portuguese and Dutch figures sitting on chairs in the company of local women.

Many painted cloths are believed to have come from Machilipatnam and Petaboli in the Telugu zone and Pulicat and Nagapattinam in the Tamil zone. In actuality, these ports on the Coromandel coast are more likely to have been points of collection and export than places of manufacture. Kalamkari production demands plentiful supplies of flowing water, which means that textile workshops had to be located at sites along major rivers. Many such sites are known from historical documents, but not one workshop can be definitely linked with a cloth dating from these centuries. Unfortunately, little more is known about the patrons for whom these textiles were made. Temples must have commissioned many of the most important textiles, especially those illustrating legends pertaining to a particular holy site. There is considerable uncertainty surrounding the sponsors of hangings with royal topics, though the Nayakas and their successors are likely to have been involved.

Southern Indian textiles may be conveniently divided according to topic and chronology. The earlier group, which is distinguished by courtly subjects, dates back to the middle of the seventeenth century. The later group, which is devoted to religious subjects and may be compared with temple paintings, dates only from the eighteenth century, though it may be presumed that

similar textiles were produced in earlier times. Cloths of both types have multiple registers crowded with figures that fill almost all of the available space. Enlarged panels occupy the middle of some cloths, while bands with accessory motifs mark the borders. Identifying labels appear in the borders of cloths with mythological topics.

Textiles with courtly subjects may have been displayed in audience halls on



184 Ruler with attendants and women, cloth hanging, seventeenth century



185 Mounted ruler surrounded by followers, cloth hanging, seventeenth century

important occasions, or unfolded as backdrops for formal receptions when kings and their retinues were on tour. A remarkable hanging that was almost certainly intended for a Southern Indian palace is that in the AEDTA Collection, Paris; it may be assigned to the second half of the seventeenth century. The cloth measures 202 centimetres wide and 155 centimetres high, but is a fragment of a larger piece. Much of the original intensity of the red, ochre and brown tones has now faded; even so, the clarity of the painting still conveys an abundance of detail. The cloth is of exceptional interest since it is entirely given over to illustrating the private and public activities of courtly life. It is divided into architecturally styled niches, both large and small, arranged in two tiers which are separated by a frieze of warriors. Each niche is framed by pilasters with animal brackets that carry cusped arches; bunched cloths and hanging flowers and garlands are shown inside. Pyramidal towers with jewel-like and yali finials rise above; attendant ladies look out from miniature windows at the upper levels. A royal figure, probably intended to represent a particular monarch, but who cannot now be identified, occupies each of the larger niches. In the upper tier he is seated together with courtly women, or is standing in the company of male attendants (Fig. 184). In the lower tier he enjoys the performance of dancing girls and musicians who occupy the adjacent niche; here, too, he is mounted on a horse surrounded by followers (Fig. 185).

The seated royal figure in the Paris textile wears a multi-coloured cloth

headpiece and richly patterned costume; he is adorned with pearl earrings and necklaces that hang over his naked chest. He grips a flowered sceptre in his left hand, while extending his right hand in the gesture of conversation (Fig. 186). Sumptuously patterned shawls are worn by the ruler when he stands surrounded by his male retinues, as in the central niche of the upper tier and in the intermediate frieze. In the enlarged scene of the ruler mounted on a horse in the lower tier, he wears a brocaded costume covering the whole body and wields a long sword. The horse is richly caparisoned with bands of bells and tassels; the animal rears up exuberantly. The king's male followers are shown with a large diversity of skin colours and costumes, no doubt to indicate different peoples. They carry swords, shields, clubs, guns and spears; they hold aloft stakes with hanging flowers and standards with brightly patterned circular designs. One attendant bears an elaborate parasol; others display standards in the shapes of a conch and a fish.

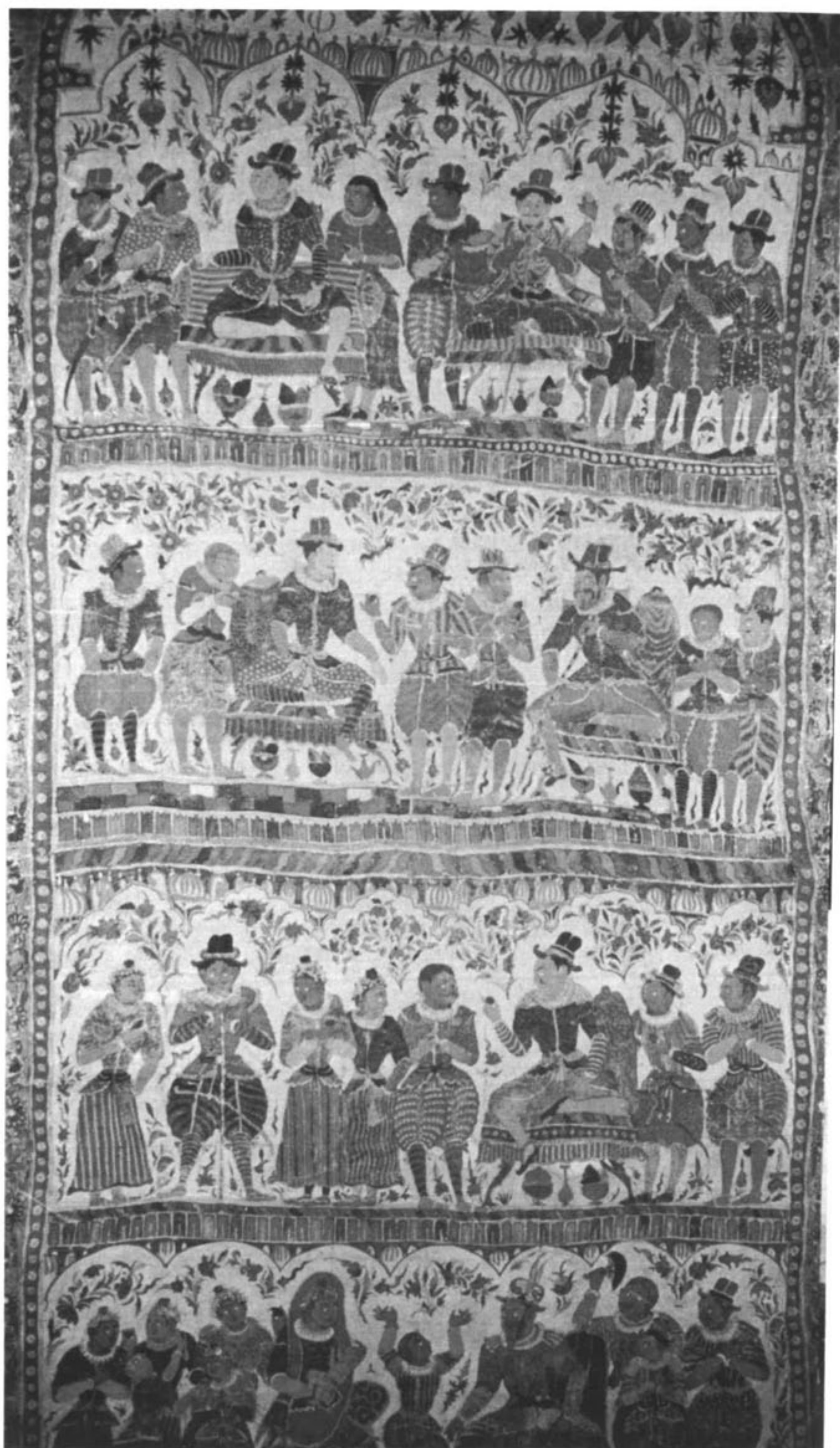
Attendant women in the Paris textile cluster around the seated figure of the ruler in the larger niches, and are combined into tightly clustered groups in the smaller intermediate niches. The backgrounds of these intermediate panels are in deep red, in contrast to the uncoloured pale backgrounds of the larger niches. The hair of these courtly women is generally bunched to one side, held in place by feathered ornaments and flowered wreaths. They are decked with enlarged circular earrings, strings of pearls, and neckbands with auspicious disc-like pendants signifying marriage. The saris have brightly coloured, striped geometric and floral patterns, no two designs being repeated. The women hold up circular and crescent-shaped standards and wave fans; they play stringed instruments and small cymbals. In the central niche of the lower tier women are shown dancing and singing, their pleated saris fanning outwards in the act of pacing out the steps.

Another example of a painted hanging illustrating courtly life was in a private collection in Japan at the turn of the century, but is now lost. (It is known only through an old photograph.) Like the Paris textile, with which it may be contemporary, it is divided into a sequence of architectural niches crowded with royal figures, attendant women and male courtiers. The ruler wears turban and long flowing garments with pleated tassels; he holds a flowered sceptre. Where shown with male followers, as in the central niche, he has changed into European costume, complete with doublet, hose and shoes; here he holds a slender rapier. Details in the upper part of the textile, especially the temple-like towers over the arches and the trees, birds and monkeys in between, suggest a stylistic link with the Sultanate courts of the Deccan. Indeed, it is possible that this textile may have been produced at a workshop partly influenced by Deccan artistic practice.

The same seems to be true of a related group of seventeenth-century hangings in the Brooklyn Museum, New York. These once formed part of a



186 Detail of seated ruler, cloth hanging, seventeenth century



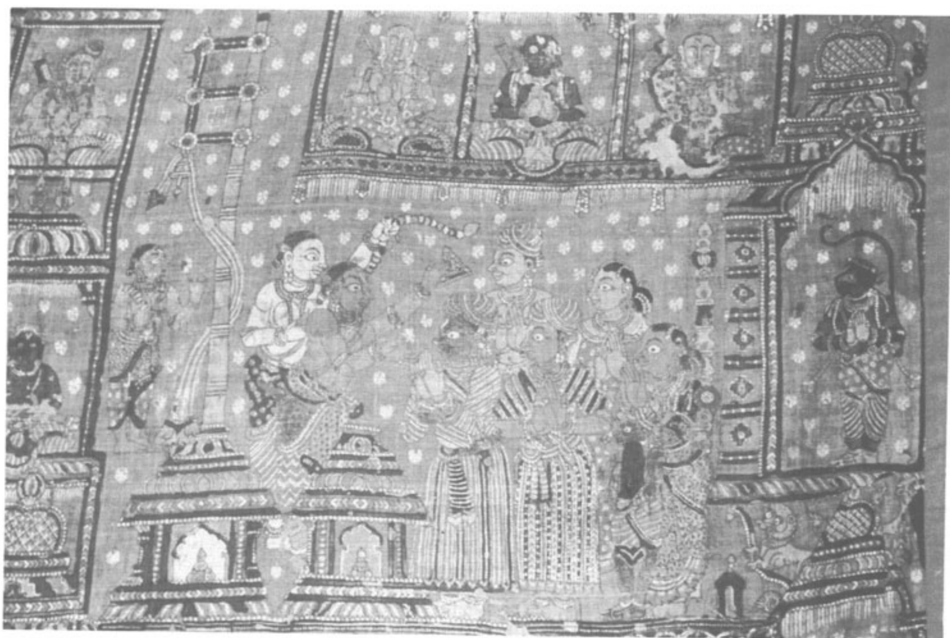
187 European courtiers, cloth hanging, seventeenth century



188 Ruler with followers, cloth hanging

single cloth of substantial dimensions, each of the seven panels measuring some 275 centimetres high and 95 centimetres across. Figures are arranged in four or more tiers, framed within cusped arches filled with hanging garlands and birds, and capped with leafy finials. The scenes are of particular interest since they show formal receptions at different courts. Variations in physiognomy and costume are clearly intended to express ethnic diversity: Indo-Persians, perhaps at one of the Deccan courts, wearing turbans and full-length jamas; Siamese with pointed hats and open-necked shirts; forest peoples wearing leafy skirts and headbands, shooting arrows at deer and tigers; even Europeans, most probably Portuguese, with top hats, ruffs, pleated doublets and buckled shoes (Fig. 187). The panel depicting a Southern Indian court shows royal figures seated on cushioned thrones in the presence of male retinues, many of whom hold their hands together in respect (Fig. 188). The males wear cloth headgear and costumes with pointed pleats; the females have their hair arranged in the usual manner to one side, their saris decked with jewels. Two soldiers with swords and shields mounted on elephants, apparently engaged in battle, appear in the bottom tier; a stepped masonry construction possibly represents a fort.

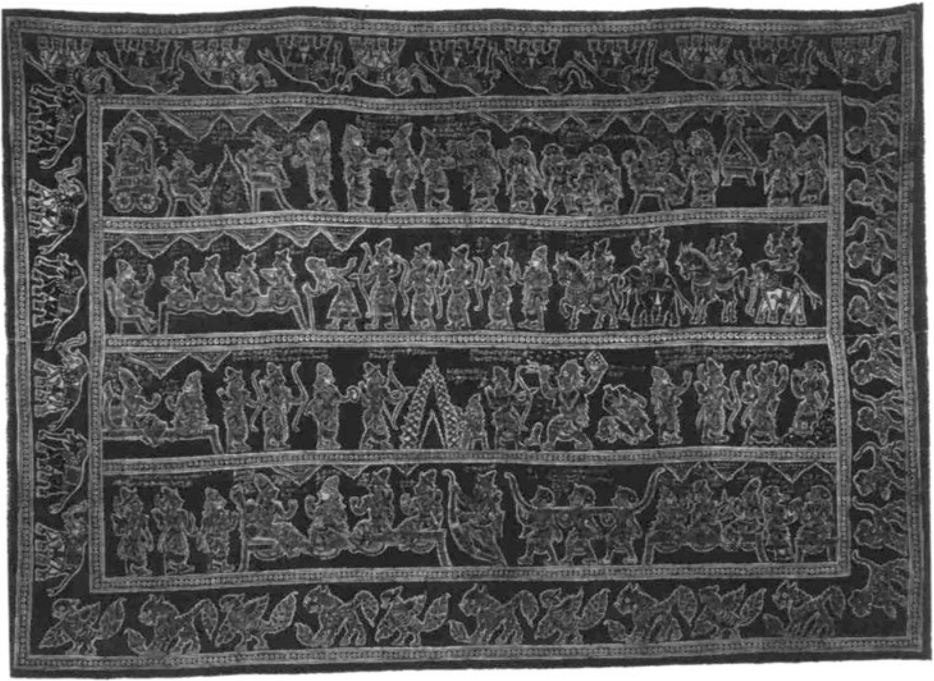
Painted textiles illustrating legendary themes present a diversity of pictorial styles, testifying to the wide dispersal of textile workshops throughout



189 Scene of worship, temple cloth, eighteenth century

Southern India. A remarkable temple cloth in the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay, measuring 296 by 212 centimetres, is divided into panels treated architecturally with pointed and cusped arches surmounted by temple-like towers. The central panels are enlarged to accommodate standing Vishnu with female attendants; Ranganatha on Shesha appears beneath, flanked by guardians with clubs, Hanuman and Garuda. Smaller scenes in the upper corners are unusual since they portray noblemen and their wives worshipping at various Vaishnava shrines, some in mountain settings, others beside lakes. Two scenes show devotees receiving blessings from priests in front of flag-columns, resembling those in actual temples (Fig. 189). Another portrays a chariot festival with devotees arranged in two lines pulling long ropes; spectators hold parasols and standards. Blue, yellow, red and white are the predominant colours; the linework is in black.

A cotton fragment in the AEDTA Collection, probably once part of a large cloth, is divided into narrow bands by brown strips with Telugu labels. The figures, on a white background, are shown in lively postures, despite the insistence on facial profiles, with one eye only visible and clearly delineated hand gestures. The scenes show different episodes from the Ramayana: Dasharatha seated on a throne, Rama and his brothers riding in the chariot, Rama and Lakshmana in the forest, Hanuman peeping into

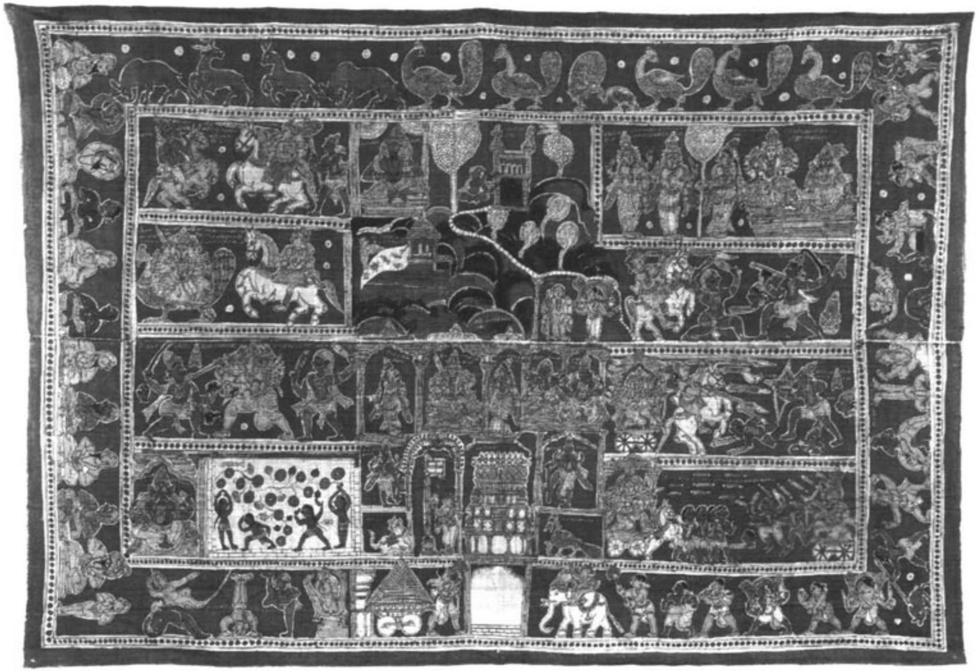


190 Bala Kanda from the Ramayana, temple cloth, eighteenth century

Ravana's bed-chamber inside the fortified palace at Lanka, and battles with flying arrows.

A related group of temple cloths in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, may have been produced in the southern part of the Tamil zone towards the middle of the eighteenth century. Some paintings are characterised by deep red backgrounds that do not quite meet the painted outlines of the figures; the resulting unpainted bands recall similar details in the Tiruppudaimarudur murals, already described (see Figs. 178 and 179). One example illustrates the Bala Kanda of the Ramayana, with a sequence of familiar episodes, from the fire sacrifice of Dasharatha and the childhood of Rama and his brothers, to the bending of Shiva's bow by the youthful hero (Fig. 190). Another depicts the different deities associated with Tirupparankunram. The temple at this hill site is shown with its towered gopura; even the Muslim shrine at the summit is included (Fig. 191). The outer band has a continuous row of lively acrobats and seated sages, geese and frolicking deer.

A separate group of hangings is executed in a completely different style, with painted dots on white or red backgrounds, and relatively small figures in somewhat rigid poses. The example in the National Museum, New Delhi, is devoted to scenes from the Sundara Kanda of the Ramayana. It shows a



191 Legends associated with Tirupparankunram, temple cloth, eighteenth century

profusion of monkeys building the bridge to Lanka, then the antics of Hanuman inside Ravana's stronghold.

Temple canopies are equally diverse in style and subject. A painted cloth in the Handicrafts and Handlooms Museum, New Delhi, about 280 centimetres square, has the coronation of Krishna in the middle, surrounded by episodes from his youth: lifting Govardhana, hiding in the tree with the cloths of the gopis, subduing Kaliya, pulling the mortar tied to a tree. The avataras of Vishnu, a set of Dikpalas, and a scene of Arjuna worshipping Krishna are also included. The subtle tones of the textile, especially the use of red, pink and blue, are accentuated by the ochre linework and white background. The cloth may be assigned to the first half of the eighteenth century, and is thought to have been produced at some workshop in the Telugu zone.

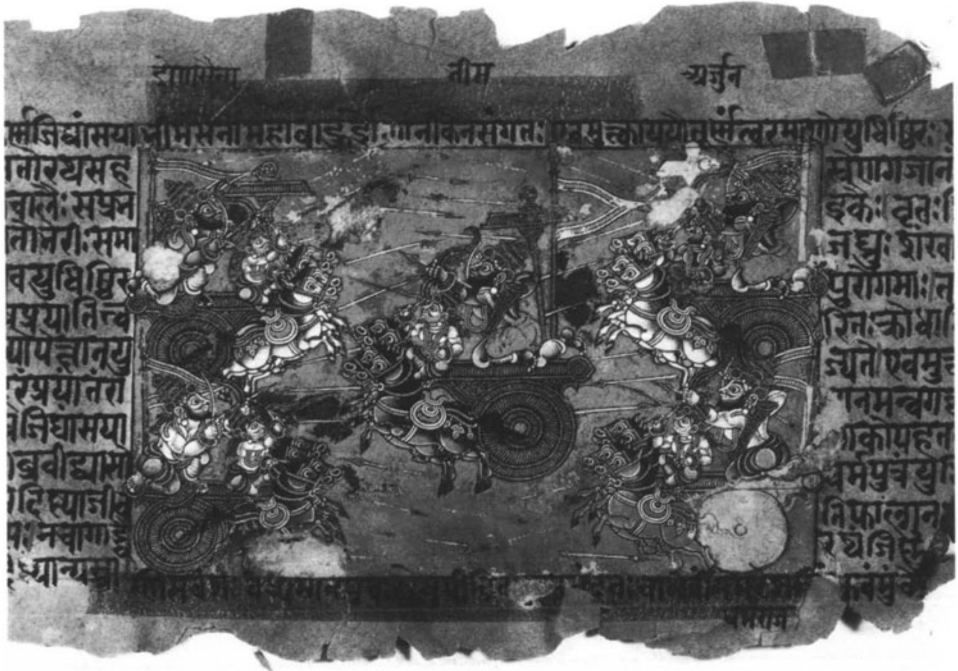
Similar in style and probably in origin is a canopy, more than 300 centimetres square, in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Basel (Fig. 192). The scenes are devoted to the different incarnations of Vishnu, each identified with a Telugu label. The central section shows Vishnu within an auspicious yantra surrounded by scenes of Rama and Krishna; narrative stories of the same gods fill the borders. The linework of this canopy is unusually delicate, as are the fresh blue, red and ochre hues.



192 Aspects of Vishnu and Krishna, temple canopy, eighteenth century

MANUSCRIPTS

Only limited evidence exists for watercolour paintings on paper in Southern India. Most examples assigned to the period under review here appear to be illustrations of epic texts, generally the Ramayana and Mahabharata. What are almost certainly the earliest known paintings of this type come from a



193 Battle scene, leaf from a Mahabharata manuscript, seventeenth century

Mahabharata manuscript, the pages of which are now widely scattered among different collections. Though discovered in the northern part of the Kannada zone, the manuscript may originally have been produced at the Wodeyar court at Mysore or Srirangapattana; the late seventeenth-century date given in the colophon has already been mentioned. Each page is a horizontal sheet measuring from 15 to 20 centimetres high, and from 40 to 45 centimetres long; a painted panel in the middle depicts the episode described in the Sanskrit text written above and below in Nagari script. A much repeated scene shows epic heroes mounted in war-chariots decked with flags and pulled by horses; they hurtle towards each other, arrows flying through the air in between. One of the finest of these battle episodes is the leaf in the Oriental Museum, University of Durham (Fig. 193). Other scenes show Draupadi watching Bhima and Kichaka wrestling, an unusual landscape with trees, birds and fish, and women in conversation (see Fig. 163). The paintings make good use of brightly toned red, yellow, purple and blue tints. Vigorous black linework creates the rounded contours for faces and bodies; the volumes are accentuated by graded tones.

Other paintings in a similar style were possibly also produced in the



194 Yashoda and Krishna, detached page, eighteenth century

Kannada zone. One group survives only as separate pages, but may originally have been bound together in book form, or sewn together in folding, accordion-like sets. The paintings, which are on cotton mounted on cardboard, show Vishnu's avataras and aspects of Krishna standing inside pointed arches from which garlands hang; other figures have architectural frames complete with side colonettes and roof-like eaves. Two pages in the Cleveland Museum of Art, measuring 28 by 20 centimetres, show scenes from Krishna's boyhood: the infant hero climbs the ladder to reach for the pots of butter, and struggles with the crane demon. Two comparable, slightly smaller pages in the Mittal Museum of Indian Art show Krishna dancing in a lotus pond with butter-balls, and holding up Govardhana to shelter the herds and wild animals. A page from a private collection portrays the infant Krishna in the lap of his foster-mother, Yashoda (Fig. 194). The brightly toned blue, sepia and red, and the energetic rounded linework, are typical of the Kannada styles, as are the enlarged rounded eyes and the long noses, repeatedly emphasised by black and white brushwork. The headdress, necklaces and belts are all part-circular in shape, thereby adding to the bulk of the figures.

A quite different style is evident in the Ramayana in the State Museum, Hyderabad. This illustrated manuscript is assigned to the eighteenth century, but there is no precise date; its style is comparable to mural paintings and painted hangings in the transitional Telugu-Tamil zone. The ninety-two detached pages of European paper backed with cotton cloth were originally 21 centimetres high and 25 centimetres wide; many have been trimmed. Most leaves have central vertical panels divided into horizontal registers, each of which is crowded with figures; lines of Telugu text in black ink are arranged on either side. A few pages, especially those portraying the greatest action, are filled with painted illustration, without any accompanying text. The lively black linework which dominates the compositions accentuates the pointed noses and eyes, and the energetic postures and varied groupings of the figures. Pale colours are added as infill, sometimes with gradations in purple wash to suggest volume; the backgrounds are generally left unpainted. Most of the important Ramayana episodes are included, the battle scenes contrasting with more static compositions depicting private conversations and courtly receptions. One page shows Rama and Lakshmana with Vishvamitra seated at the court of Janaka; attendants beneath carry Shiva's immense bow, which in the adjacent scene is bent by Rama in the act of winning the contest. Another shows Rama shooting a demon above, and sages performing a fire sacrifice below (Fig. 195). Double-page illustrations tend to be crowded with warriors in chariots, pairs of grappling fighters and arrows flying through the air (Fig. 196). Rama's monkey allies are distinguished by darker tints; Ravana's demonic hoards have multiple heads and limbs.

That paintings on paper in the Tamil zone were produced in styles differing



195 Rama shooting a demon and sages performing a fire sacrifice, page from a Ramayana manuscript, eighteenth century



196 Battle scene, page from a Ramayana manuscript, eighteenth century

from those in the Kannada and Telugu zones is demonstrated by a Ramayana in the Sarasvati Mahal Library, Thanjavur. The manuscript, which is presumed to have been produced in the central Tamil zone, is no earlier than the middle of the eighteenth century. Only three separated pages, 12 centimetres high by 30 centimetres wide, are on display; each is divided into narrow horizontal strips crowded with figures, separated by black bands with Tamil labels. Episodes from the different chapters of the Ramayana are combined into a single leaf. The Bala Kanda, for instance, includes the Shravanakumara story which serves as a prologue, the meeting of Vishvamitra and Dasharatha, Dasharatha's fire sacrifice, Vishnu reclining on the serpent prior to his descent to earth as Rama, the birth of Rama and his brothers, their early training in archery under the guidance of Vishvamitra, Rama and Lakshmana fighting with the ogress Tataka, the contest in which Rama bends Shiva's bow, the marriage celebrations, and finally the return of Rama and Sita to Ayodhya (Fig. 197). The distribution of figures on unpainted white backgrounds and the restrained and static linework are hallmarks of the Tamil style; bright colours are reserved for costumes, crowns and the pavilions inside which figures are formally



197 *Bala Kanda, illustrated Ramayana page, eighteenth century*

grouped. An additional half page from the same manuscript is now in the Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

A number of other paintings in the Sarasvati Mahal Library register the influence of Deccan art. Produced under the sponsorship of the Maratha court, these paper manuscripts are arranged in traditional horizontal formats, but are distinguished by bands of brightly coloured floral motifs with entwined petals and leaves surrounding central blocks of texts and painted panels. A typical example dating from the middle of the eighteenth century shows celestials, kings and courtiers paying respect to Nataraja within the shrine at Chidambaram. They wear Maratha-style costumes, with long cloaks, swords and shields, but the conical crowns are of local inspiration. Most figures are shown in profile, with sharply delineated faces. Other manuscripts in this collection, some with painted portraits of Maratha rulers, demonstrate the intrusion of Deccan painting traditions into Southern India by this time.

ALBUMS

Albums of paintings on paper illustrating the principal Hindu divinities were produced for European visitors from as early as the second half of the seventeenth century onwards. Illustrations are usually accompanied by explanatory captions in indigenous languages, as well as in English or French, written on the reverse. One of the largest sets, now in the Warsaw University Library, is believed to have been produced in the first half of the eighteenth century, probably in the transitional Telugu-Tamil zone. It consists of some 105 gods and goddesses, including all of Vishnu's avataras, the principal scenes from the Ramayana and Krishna legends, and well-known temple deities, such as Ekambareshvara, Arunchaleshvara and Nataraja. The figures are formally

posed, either frontally or in profile, in arched frames adorned with hanging garlands. The black linework emphasises the curved contours of eyebrows and eyes, and the details of jewels and tassels, emblems and weapons. Colour is applied somewhat crudely in opaque tones for backgrounds, as well as in modulated shades for faces and limbs.

Other albums with similar encyclopaedic sets of Hindu divinities testify to a relatively unified pictorial style that was widespread in the eighteenth century. One of the earliest known sets is that commissioned by Niccolao Manucci for his 'Storia do Mogor', now in the Library of San Marco, Venice. Prepared between 1699 and 1701 by artists in Madras, the pictures include scenes of religious life as practised locally: processions of temple deities, portraits of attendant brahmin priests, forest ascetics practising penance, male and female worshippers at diverse shrines. Nor are mythological events neglected, as is evident from a map of Lanka, accompanied by a miniature sketch of Hanuman with his tail on fire. The watercolours are inventive compositions with vigorous brushwork, often with shading; the profusion of detail suggests that the artists may have worked from direct observation.

Further evidence for the mingling of Southern Indian traditions with Deccan schools is seen in an album produced in 1757 at Rajahmundry, in the Godavari Delta region of the Telugu zone, for a French official. Some eighty-six pages, each about 32 centimetres square, with a painting on one side and a description in Telugu on the reverse, are now in the collection of the Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg. A wide assortment of Hindu divinities is depicted here, including different aspects of Shiva and Vishnu's avataras. Among the episodes from the Krishna story are the youthful god playing the flute in the company of gopis, dancing on the serpent Kaliya, and hiding up the tree beneath which is a group of naked gopis. Ramayana scenes include the climactic battle of Rama and Ravana, and discussions between Rama and the sages and monkeys (Fig. 198). Obviously indigenous features of these paintings are the formal postures of gods and their attendants, the details of crowns, jewels and costumes that they wear, and the somewhat crudely defined architectural frames and thrones. The flat and clear linework on brightly coloured red or blue backgrounds is a further indicator of a local pictorial heritage.

MINIATURE WOODEN SHRINES

Diminutive images of temple deities in portable wooden shrines must have been popular throughout Southern India for domestic worship, but not one has survived which predates the early eighteenth century; most known examples are somewhat later. They are included here for their wealth of painted images which may be compared with those on temple walls and



198 Rama in discussion, album page, dated 1757

ceilings, though at a much smaller scale, as well as with those in manuscripts. The shrines are fashioned as boxes, with carved and painted votive icons inside, generally of Venkateshvara, indicating that they may have been produced for the temple at Tirumala. The principal artistic interest of these shrines are the figural compositions painted on to the doors that fold outwards in two or more leaves.

The earliest known wooden shrine was sent to Europe in 1733; it is now in the Fränckische Stiftungen, Halle. It is no more than 50 centimetres high, but when fully open extends some 140 centimetres, with the carved image of Venkateshvara in the middle. The folding doors are painted with a wide range of Vaishnava themes. Vishnu is repeatedly depicted, and is even supported on



199 Coronation of Rama, door panel, miniature shrine, eighteenth century

the upturned hands of Hanuman and Garuda. The god reclines on the multi-headed serpent beneath a pyramidal temple tower, no doubt a reference to the Srirangam shrine. Ramayana and Krishna narratives also appear, including the scene of the youthful god trampling the serpent Kaliya. The paintings are distinguished by a sinuous linework with patches of bright ochres and blues;



200 Scenes from the childhood of Krishna, door panel, miniature shrine, eighteenth century

the backgrounds are either red or white. The compositions are crowded with figures, the principal deities being larger than the characters in the narrative episodes. Garlands hang from the upper bands; flowers and petals fill the backgrounds. The use of line and colour to create faces with staring eyes, rounded eyebrows and long pointed noses is a typical feature.

A similar shrine, probably slightly later in date than the Halle example, is now in the Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde, Munich. Polychrome miniature images of Venkateshvara, Ranganatha and Krishna are placed inside the miniature sanctuary. The front doors are encrusted with plaster and coloured glass to create a textured surface with a full set of Vishnu's avataras, each figure within an arched niche; other formally posed images of the god fill the outside faces of two side doors, while another two doors have enthroned Rama, and Vishnu seated together with Lakshmi and Bhudevi (Fig. 199). The figures are all formally posed, the eyes staring straight ahead; the details of the conical crowns, richly jewelled costumes and various emblems held in the hands are clearly defined. Garlands hang from the ornate frames that surround the figures; temple-like towers rise above. The inner faces of the doors illustrate the most popular stories of Vishnu and Krishna. One door shows the infant Krishna kicking the cart, suckling the breast of Putana, fighting the elephant and crane demons, stealing the butter, and slaying the wicked Kamsa (Fig. 200). Another has Krishna dancing on Kaliya, sucking his toe, hiding the clothes of the gopis, and holding up Govardhana. Thick black linework and white highlights accentuate the rounded contours of faces, bodies and limbs, as well as necklaces, belts and swaying earrings.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

It is no easy task to attempt an overview of the artistic character of Southern India under Vijayanagara and the successor states. As must be clear by now, architecture and art in the four hundred years or so considered in this volume manifest a broad range of formal attributes and iconic types that cannot be reduced to a single stylistic formula that would be indicative of the age. The strategy adopted in this chapter is to define several alternative, but simultaneous stylistic movements, or processes, while at the same time drawing attention to a set of unifying themes that helped achieve artistic coherence. The interaction between stylistic processes and unifying themes may be taken as crucial to the aesthetic personality of the era.

STYLISTIC PROCESSES

The three stylistic processes detected in the architecture and art works of Southern India in these centuries are not conceived as mutually exclusive traditions, but rather as overlapping and interacting movements. The first process looks backwards in time to past forms which were imitated and then preserved through a conscious archaism. This revivalist tendency is best appreciated in temple vimanas, the most orthodox parts of religious complexes, both ritually and artistically. The second process looks forward in time to new forms and types. This innovative tendency is most obvious in the evolution of temple mandapas and gopuras. An unmistakable spirit of improvisation dictates the third process, resulting in a remarkable stylistic synthesis and integration. Significantly, this last trend is intimately connected with the world of the king since it dominates the architecture of the palace.

The conscious revival of past forms has already been observed in the chapters on religious architecture. Temples in the Vijayanagara period rely upon Tamil modes harking back to Chola and Pandya times. By the sixteenth century, the Chola-Pandya paradigm has established itself as the quintessential Vijayanagara idiom. This archaistic process dictates the forms of temple vimanas which are almost always designed in accordance with earlier practice. This is particularly true for sanctuaries of Nayaka complexes, such as those of the Kumbheshvara and Sarangapani temples at Kumbakonam, which are replicas of tenth- and eleventh-century schemes. Such a conscious revival of Chola and Pandya prototypes was, no doubt, only possible with the aid of detailed manuals that codified building practice in all of its technical and

stylistic particulars. There must also have been a symbolic basis for much of this imitative process: only an architecture that was firmly embedded in the past, it seems, could function as a suitable setting for devotional rites.

The same retrograde tendency has been noted in the chapter on sculpture. Carved stone panels and processional bronzes imitate earlier models so perfectly that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish later work from earlier modes. It may be presumed that stone-cutters and bronze-casters took considerable pains to replicate earlier sculpture according to the dictates of well-established codes of practice. This is most apparent in major cult icons that conform to orthodox prototypes, thereby serving as appropriate objects of veneration.

If revivalism and archaism dominate temple vimanas and their art, then innovation characterises other parts of the religious complex. The stylistic process that regulates mandapas and gopuras is directed towards the development of entirely new techniques, forms and images. Considerable technical advances are discovered in temple mandapas, which expand into spacious hundred- and thousand-columned halls. A skilful handling of structural elements accompanies these architectural advances, such as the use of inverted 'T' beams to span central spaces, and the transformation of load-bearing components into complex architectural and sculptural compositions. Piers are adorned with multiple, three-dimensional colonettes clustered around the shafts, or are converted into large-scale, fully modelled figures and animals. Such virtuoso displays of sculptural skills are more conspicuous in halls and corridors than anywhere else within the religious complex; so, too, is a newly fashionable imagery concentrating on royal and martial themes: kings and courtiers are portrayed as temple donors; armed warriors ride springing horses and mythical beasts. Nor is artistic invention in temple mandapas confined to the plastic arts. The chapter on painting explains that ceiling paintings were the most extensive and elaborate pictorial compositions of the era. Cycles of paintings give visible form to popular myths and local legends. Panels crowded with figures, usually accompanied by captions identifying the principal characters, constitute a sophisticated art of narration.

Entrance gopuras are by far the most dramatic instances of technical and artistic innovation within the religious complex. Architects responded to demands of patrons by designing ever-higher towers, even when the ambitions of some sponsors outmatched their means, as in Tirumala Nayaka's unfinished projects at Madurai and Alagarkoil. Granite basements become higher and more elaborate, while brick constructions on timber frameworks become taller and more slender, reaching a climax in the eleven-storeyed towers of Srirangam and Srivilliputtur. As has been pointed out, the ascending levels at diminishing scales are skilfully manipulated to achieve illusionistic effects of perspective. The sculptural portions of gopuras also respond to this inventive

trend with tiers of imagery in fully modelled and vividly coloured plaster-work.

A quite different stylistic process, mostly confined to the realm of royal architecture, coexists with the developments just described. Southern Indian palaces are built in a style that incorporates techniques, forms and decorative motifs derived from the architecture of the Bahmani kingdom. These imported elements are not merely borrowed and then reused; they are successfully integrated with indigenous features to create a genuinely novel synthesis. This courtly style begins with the modest but inventive designs of royal buildings at Vijayanagara, and reaches its ultimate expression in the imposing ceremonial halls at Thanjavur and Madurai. In spite of the grandiose scale of these later schemes, the essentially composite nature of the idiom is retained.

Courtly architecture at Vijayanagara presents a blend of diverse elements that cannot easily be disentangled. The stylistic fusion here is so complete that there is no apparent conflict between different features; the same blend of components is evident in Nayaka palaces. This synthetic, but fully integrated manner is closely identified with royal residences, being almost always restricted to the principal centres of power. Undoubtedly, this style was invented expressly for kings and courtiers, and was the chosen idiom for courtly settings where the many peoples, languages and customs of Southern India met and intermingled.

UNIFYING THEMES

It might at first be thought that the divergent currents in architecture, sculpture and painting would have led to an overall lack of artistic consistency, but this does not seem to be the case. An investigation of the means by which artistic coherence was forged between different categories of buildings, sculptures and paintings draws attention to a number of unifying themes that are used repeatedly at different scales and in different media. Three themes of particular significance are isolated here: the first concerns the architectural frame for figures, both divine and royal; the second introduces the image of the ruler; the third concentrates on the ubiquitous yali.

The arched frame containing one or more figures recurs throughout Southern Indian architecture, sculpture and painting. In spite of a large variety of applications, this arch almost always consists of a pair of pilasters supporting a pointed or cusped arch with makaras at the ends, flame-like tufts on the sides and a yali head at the apex; a fanciful pyramidal tower sometimes rises above. Arches of this type are employed as niches in temple walls, parapets and towers, surrounding divinities and other celestials. There is often a tendency to exaggerate the fierce expression of the yali head, as is apparent on the arched ends of gopura roofs. Inside the temple, such arches are

sometimes carved in shallow relief to draw attention to donor figures and important deities. Nor is the appearance of these arches limited to the religious context; palace architecture makes use of exactly the same devices for openings and recesses. Doorways and windows in this context are provided with pointed or cusped arches, often encrusted with thick plasterwork, replete with bird and yali motifs.

Similar frames are also employed at a smaller scale. Finely worked ivory panels show courtiers beneath cusped arches intended to suggest palace settings. In another context, the same arches evidently refer to temples, as in the miniature ivory panels carved with divinities. Cusped arches in brass illuminated by oil lamps serve as prabhavalis at temple doorways; diminutive bronze frames inserted into pedestals surround processional images of gods and goddesses. This use of the arch to emphasise figures also extends to painting. Central panels in both ceiling compositions and cotton hangings present deities standing or seated within pointed or cusped frames. The same motifs occur in textiles with courtly subjects. In the painted hanging in the AEDTA Collection, Paris, for instance, arches suggest the halls of a palace within which a ruler is repeatedly portrayed together with his retinues.

Figural topics are also used as unifying themes, forging links between architecture, sculpture and painting. Portraits of royal personalities appear as major compositions on granite piers and plastered parapets and towers; they are also cast in metal and then installed in front of temple sanctuaries. Though these figures hold their hands together humbly in devotion, regal status is conveyed by crowns, jewels, costumes and weapons, also by attendant courtiers and women. Similar figures in arched settings occur on ivory caskets and brightly printed cloths. Such scenes must have formed part of mural compositions in royal audience halls and sleeping chambers, but no such paintings have been preserved other than those in the Setupati palace at Ramanathapuram. Groups of royal personalities are also incorporated into religious architecture, as is obvious in the elaborate portrait galleries of temple halls and corridors, some of which, as in the Pudu Mandapa at Madurai, present visual dynastic histories. Royal worshippers appear in painted compositions, often as accessory and diminutive characters beside the principal deity.

Such royal figural conventions are by no means confined to kings and courtiers: gods and goddesses, too, wear royal costumes and display courtly regalia. In this way, the visual arts bridge the worlds of kings and gods. Often there is no iconographic distinction between terrestrial and celestial settings; both are framed by the same arches. The repeated accent on coronation and marriage scenes reinforces the stately component in religious imagery. The enthronement of Rama, for example, serves as a prototype for all coronation scenes in Southern Indian sculpture and painting. In a frequently repeated

composition, the god is seated on a throne together with Sita, with an arch above to indicate the palace at Ayodhya. The celestial couple is accompanied by Rama's brothers, the monkey allies and rejoicing gods who are shown more like courtiers than celestials. In spite of the legendary nature of the topic, the atmosphere is manifestly noble. Enthronement compositions form part of the decor of actual palaces, such as the plaster tableau of Rama over the Nayaka throne in the audience hall at Thanjavur; painted cloths with the same topics were probably unfurled in audience halls on ceremonial occasions. Marriage scenes are similarly royal in character. Carved and painted matrimonial groups illustrating local legends play a significant role in temple art. The marriage of Minakshi and Sundareshvara, for instance, is repeated throughout the Madurai complex, both on columns and ceilings. As in enthronement scenes, the god and goddess are represented as king and queen, decked in courtly crowns, costumes and jewels.

The last of the three unifying themes introduces the mythical yali, a beast that recurs throughout the architecture, sculpture and painting of the period. Yalis constitute a significant component in temples and palaces, on basement friezes and balustrades, piers and columns, niches and arches. This most pervasive of all motifs seems to have been imbued with a particular purpose, judging from the locations of these animals at entrance and summit, the two most ritually vulnerable points in temples and palaces. They are also associated with the act of support, being carved at the bases of columns and pilasters, as well as on the brackets carrying beams and ceiling slabs. Yalis communicate an unmistakable energy through their demonic eyes and fangs, and their tensely crouching, springing postures. They are often ithyphallic, thereby confirming their magical potency.

The appearance of such beasts is by no means confined to architectural settings. Yalis were carved and cast in countless miniature aspects to become a popular theme, especially in objects designated for courtly use. Tiny leaping animals appear on chiselled handles and hilts of ceremonial weapons; crouching animals are utilised for the feet of caskets and thrones.

THE ARTISTIC LEGACY

Though the survey presented in this volume does not extend beyond the eighteenth century, this cutoff date does not signify the demise of the arts in Southern India. The artistic legacy of the Vijayanagara and Nayaka periods may best be estimated by considering how this tradition survived into later times.

The renewed fortunes of several local dynasties in the nineteenth century led to the revival of large-scale building projects. The Wodeyars, who were restored to the throne by the British, sponsored temples at Mysore and nearby

Nanjangud; the Marathas, who similarly enjoyed British protection, built extensively at Thanjavur and Kumbakonam. Certain religious institutions enjoyed sufficient income from their estates to ensure continuity of religious rites and maintenance of buildings and art works. Temples at Tiruvannamalai and Chidambaram, for instance, were substantially renovated in the nineteenth century, during which their focal shrines were entirely rebuilt; the same is true at Tirumala and Srisailam in the present century. That this renewal process is ongoing is demonstrated by the tower soaring above the southernmost gopura at Srirangam, a structure founded by the Nayakas, but which was finally completed only in 1987. In these and comparable projects, architects and masons display a conservatism that fulfils the orthodox approach of their predecessors.

One development that could not have been anticipated in earlier times is the widespread dispersal of Southern Indian traditions. Shrines erected by the Tamil communities of Sri Lanka from the eighteenth century onwards are typically Southern Indian in style. That similar temples were built elsewhere in the Subcontinent is revealed by the sanctuary dedicated to Ranganatha erected in 1851 at Brindavan in Northern India. This tendency has continued into the present century and is now a global phenomenon. Temples in the Southern Indian manner are currently in use for worship all over the world, from Pittsburgh and Malibu to Durban and Singapore.

A vibrant sculptural heritage accompanies this architectural heritage. Temple walls and towers continue to be cloaked in polychromed figures, but these tend to be executed in moulded cement since masonry techniques have suffered an overall decline in the last two centuries. A newly awakened interest in stone carving, resulting in a conscious revival of past forms, has been stimulated by the growth of art colleges in the region, as at Mamallapuram. Bronze-casting has also dwindled, but not entirely died out. As with temple architects, metalworkers in the nineteenth century were committed to repeating earlier models, a situation that has not altered in contemporary bronze workshops, like that at Kumbakonam.

In contrast, striking changes have transformed the pictorial arts over the last two centuries. While it is true that temples continued to be adorned with somewhat conventional religious paintings under the Wodeyars and Marathas, the rulers of these two dynasties were also responsible for fostering entirely new schools of painting. Iconic forms and techniques familiar from temple walls and ceilings were often presented in a size and format influenced by European framed oil paintings. The brightly toned and occasionally encrusted compositions of Mysore and Thanjavur represent a spectacular efflorescence in Southern Indian painting. Such compositions are executed on linen mounted on board or on mica, often with glass inlays and gilded paste to create richly gleaming textures. Miniature paintings on paper are also known in comparable

styles, such as the illustrated Ramayana sets produced for Krishnaraja Wodeyar III in the early nineteenth century. A fascination with things European pervades these altar pieces and manuscripts: Neoclassical buildings, British soldiers in military formations, and winged angels holding garlands are common motifs. European devices such as perspective and shading are integrated with indigenous practice. But this painting tradition did not survive the nineteenth century, being supplanted by cheaper, more easily reproduced coloured prints.

Not unlike painting, later royal architecture in Southern India also exhibits considerable creativity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The process of stylistic synthesis identified in the courtly buildings of the Rayas and Nayakas was sustained in later times. The restored Wodeyars, for instance, erected several palaces in Mysore, including the Lakshmi Vilas designed by the British architect Henry Irwin in 1897. This residence incorporates elements derived from disparate traditions. The cylindrical columns with cusped arches and exuberant plasterwork are typically Southern Indian; so, too, the ivory and silver doors and the wooden panelled ceilings. The cast-iron columns and stained-glass ceilings, however, are entirely novel. Their appearance in the Mysore palace testifies to a spirit of creativity and a quest for technical innovation that have animated architecture and the arts in Southern India since Vijayanagara times.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

The purpose of this essay, which follows the layout of the sequence of chapters, is to list the most important bibliographical references for each topic. Publications are cited by author(s), or by city in the case of certain exhibition catalogues, and date of publication. More complete informations is given in the Bibiography (pp. 283–94). Only works in European languages appear.

The best bibliographical starting point for Southern India under Vijayanagara is Rajasekhara (1985), who has compiled the largest number of publications dealing with the era, including pertinent archaeological and epigraphical sources; unfortunately, there are no subdivisions according to subject. A better organised, though somewhat select bibliography is the essay included in Stein (1989:147–51). Here, however, there are only occasional references to studies on architecture and art.

1 INTRODUCTION

No comprehensive works are yet available that satisfactorily encompass the history of building, sculpture and painting in Southern India during the Vijayanagara and Nayaka periods. Publications that may appear at first to offer extensive treatments, such as Saletore (1982) and Rajasekhara (1983), are in fact mostly concerned with monuments at the Vijayanagara capital. Articles and chapters in general surveys provide only the barest introduction to the subject: Sarma Rao (1946–7), Goetz (1959:188–93), Bussagli and Sivaramamurti (1971:264–9), Huntington (1985:chs. 23–5) and Harle (1986:chs. 23–4). The somewhat summary coverage in these publications does not mean that Southern Indian buildings and art works from this era have always been unappreciated. Pioneering studies are by Fergusson (1876), Chisholm (1876, 1883) and Gopinatha Rao (1914–16).

The potential of Southern India in the centuries under review has been recognised for some time now by scholars in disciplines other than art history. Studies focusing on economic and social history include Stein (1960, 1975, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1992), Appadurai (1977), Karashima (1984, 1992), Karashima *et al.* 1988, Appadurai-Breckenridge (1985), Ludden (1985), Ramaswamy (1985a, 1985b), Arasaratnam (1986), Rudner (1987) and Subrahmanya (1990). Religious traditions are examined in Welbon and Yocum (1982), Fuller (1984), Harman (1989), Hudson (1993), Michell (1993) and Verghese (1995). An appraisal of contemporary Islam and Christianity is offered by Bayly (1989). Southern India's courtly culture is examined by Appadurai-Breckenridge (1978), Dirks (1987) and Narayana Rao, Shulman and Subrahmanya (1992). An unpublished work of interest here is Sridhara Babu (1975).

Mention should be made of studies on monuments and art works excluded from the present survey. Mosques and tombs are discussed in Shokoohy (1991, 1993); relevant epigraphs are provided by Desai (1989). Wooden architecture and sculpture are treated in Kalidos (1989) and Michell (1992d). Export cloths are described in Irwin (1956), Irwin and Brett (1970), Jouxis (1970) and Gittinger (1982). Later mural traditions in the Kannada zone are mentioned by Karanth (1973), Rao and Sastry (1980) and

Rajasekhara (1982). Appasamy (1980a, 1980b) is one of the few scholars to look at the paintings on wood and glass from the Tamil zone.

2 HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

There is no shortage of literature on Southern Indian history from the fourteenth–eighteenth centuries and several recent studies have already been mentioned. The basic surveys of the Vijayanagara empire are Sewell (1900), Krishna Sastri (1911–13), Krishnaswami Aiyangar (1921, 1936), Heras (1927), Venkataramanayya (1933, 1935), Saletore (1934), Mahalingam (1940, 1951), Krishnaswami (1964), Venkata Ratnam (1972), Subrahmanya (1973), Rama Sharma (1978, 1980), Stein (1984, 1985, 1989), Dikshit (1988) and Nagaraju (1991).

Works that focus on successor states such as the Nayaka kingdoms include Rangacharya (1914), Puttaiya (1923) Sathyanatha Aiyar (1924), Subrahmanian (1928), Venkatesan (1928), Vriddhagirisan (1942), Srinivasachari (1943), Somasekhara Sarma (1948), Hayavadhana Rao (1948), Sathianathaier (1956), Swaminathan (1957), Krishnaswami (1964), Ramesh (1970), Chitnis (1974), Devakunjari (1979) and Sampath (1980).

Epigraphic materials provide the primary data for historical studies. The main serial publications are *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy*, *Annual Report of the Mysore Archaeological Department*, *Epigraphia Carnatica*, *Epigraphia Indica* and *South Indian Inscriptions*. Additional inscriptional information relevant to the period is found in Sewell (1884, 1932), Rangacharya (1919), Vijayaraghavacharya (1930–8), Panchamukhi (1941–73), Filliozat (1973), Gopal (1985–90) and Patil (forthcoming). Indigenous literary sources relevant to the period are discussed and translated by Krishnaswami Aiyangar (1919), Rangasvami Sarasvati (1926), Raghavacharyulu (1929–30), Raghavan (1940), Nilakanta Sastri and Venkataramanayya (1946), Panchamukhi (1953), Krishnamurthy (1988) and Wagoner (1993).

3 TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE: THE KANNADA AND TELUGU ZONES

No comprehensive work is available for temple architecture in Southern India during the Vijayanagara and Nayaka periods. Earlier architectural traditions in the Kannada and Telugu zones are treated in Srinivasan (1971:ch. vii), Huntington (1985:chs. 21, 22), Harle (1986:chs. 18, 22) and Patil (1992). For temple architecture and sculpture of the Hoysalas and Kakatiyas, see Narasimhachar (1917, 1919), Rama Rao (1966), Gopalakrishnamurthy (1970) and Settar (1991). For the Chola and later Pandya monuments of the Tamil zone, see Balasubrahmanya (1971, 1975, 1979), Barrett (1974), Soundara Rajan (1981) and Meister and Dhaky (1983).

The two volumes of Dhaky and Michell (in preparation) aim at a relatively complete coverage of Vijayanagara and Nayaka temples; they will include a large selection of plans and photographs. General overviews of the subject are presented by Srinivasan (1971:ch. viii) and Raman (1990). Publications concentrating on the Vijayanagara site include descriptions of religious architecture: Longhurst (1917), Devakunjari (1970), Nagaraja Rao (1983, 1985), Fritz, Michell and Nagaraja Rao (1984), Michell (1985, 1990), Filliozat and Filliozat (1988), Settar (1990), Fritz, Michell and Gollings (1991), Devaraj and Patil (1991a, 1991b, 1993), Dallapiccola, Fritz, Michell and Rajasekhara (1992), and Dallapiccola, Michell and Patil (in preparation).

Vijayanagara temples in the Kannada and Telugu zones are described in monographs

and articles covering a wide spectrum of sites. Kameswara Rao (1976) gives an overview of the principal monuments in the Telugu zone. Individual temples are described by Longhurst (1917–18), Krishna (1936), Cousins (1937), Rama Rao (1960–1), Gopala Rao (1969), Gopalakrishnamurthy (1970), Ramaswami (1976, 1981), Sitapati (1982), Parabrahma Sastry (1982), Gurumurthi (1990), Vasantha (1991), Kamalakar (1993) and Michell (forthcoming). The temples at Tirupati and Tirumala have attracted the most attention: Krishnaswami Aiyangar (1940–1), Viraraghavacharya (1953), Padmavati (1963), Subrahmanya Sastry (1981), Ramesan (1981) and Raman (1985). Temple architecture in the Kanara district is a separate topic: see Cousens (1926), Gururaja Bhatt (1969, 1975), Ramesh (1972) and Srinivasan (1975).

Little information is available for the religious architecture of later dynasties in the Kannada zone, other than incidental references to monuments contained in the historical works already noted. Jois (1991) makes preliminary remarks on the Nayaka temples; the Gowda and Wodeyar monuments of Bangalore are mentioned in Hasan (1970).

Much valuable information on religious monuments is contained in archaeological series: *Annual Reports, Archaeological Survey of Mysore* and *Annual Reports of the Archaeological Department of His Highness the Nizam's Domains*; see also the compilation of Cousens (1900). The *Census of India 1961: District Gazetteers* for Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh include useful, though summary descriptions of monuments in the 'Places of Interest' section at the end of each volume.

4 TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE: THE TAMIL ZONE

Perhaps because of the scholarly focus on Chola and Pandya monuments, there is an overall deficiency of attention to religious architecture in the Vijayanagara and Nayaka periods; not one of the publications mentioned here concentrates exclusively on these later centuries. Jagadisa Ayyar (1920) briefly notices many of the complexes discussed in this chapter; a fairly complete list of religious sites is given by Sewell (1882). A standard reference, though unreliable in terms of architectural history, is the set of volumes comprising the *Census of India 1961: Vol. IX Madras, Part D, Temples of Madras State*.

A number of studies concentrate on individual monuments: Vananamalai Pillai (1929), Balasubrahmanya (1931), Pillay (1953), Gravely (1959), Harle (1963), Hari Rao (1967, 1976), Auboyer (1969), Kumara Raj (1974), Raman (1975), Satyamurti (1978), Swamy (1979), Devakunjari (1979), Raghupathy (1983), Jeyechandrun (1985) and L'Hérnault, Pichard and Deloche (1990). Among the unpublished dissertations of interest are Chandrakumar (1983) and Singh (1992).

Temple architecture in adjacent Kerala is reviewed by Soundara Rajan (1974) and Sarkar (1978).

5 PALACE ARCHITECTURE

In spite of the pioneering survey of Reuther (1925), there is a dearth of publications dealing with royal monuments, particularly those in Southern India. An overall perspective for the Vijayanagara period is attempted by Michell (1992a).

Military and courtly monuments at Vijayanagara are noticed in many of the previous citations. Additional information is provided by Heras (1931), Sandanandan (1964–5), Goetz (1966), Fischer (1985), Patil (1985), Fritz and Michell (1987, 1991),

Blurton (1989), Michell (1992b and 1992c) and Davison-Jenkins (1995). Works dating from the 1980s onwards take into account the excavations at the site. The interpretation of Vijayanagara's courtly monuments proposed by Narasimhaiah (1992) is unconvincing.

There are no specialised studies on Nayaka palaces, but descriptions of the royal complexes at Gingee, Thanjavur and Madurai may be found in Chisholm (1876), Garstin (1878), Cox (1894), Toy (1957), Devakunjari (1979), Sundara (1987) and Michell (1991). For the palace at Ramanathapuram, see Nagaswamy and Ramaswami (1979).

An idea of the Bahmani origins of the Southern Indian courtly style may be had from Yazdani (1974), Desai (1974), Schotten-Merklinger (1981), Michell (1986b) and Michell and Eaton (1992).

6 SCULPTURE

Sculpture in Southern India during these centuries has yet to form the subject of an independent enquiry. Krishna Sastri (1916), Suresh (1995) and Dallapiccola and Verghese (in preparation) provide overall introductions to iconic forms current in the region during this era. Portrait sculptures are separately treated by Aravamuthan (1931), Ramaswami (1979) and Rao (1992). Hurpré (1986, 1989) examines details of costumes and jewels in Nayaka art.

Temple carvings are described in many of the works already cited; additional information may be found in Heras (1924, 1926), Nagaraja Rao (1979), Michell (1986a), Deloche (1987), Verghese (1991) and Visvesvara (1993). Bronzes belonging to this era are discussed in Ganguly (1915), Hadaway (1922), Nagaswamy (1979), Males (1979), Sivaramamurti (1981), Dye (1982), Fickle (1983), Dehejia (1988) and Abdul Majeed (1992). Both stone and metal sculptures are illustrated in a number of exhibition catalogues: Coomaraswamy (1923), Kramrisch (1960, 1981), Srinivasan (1963), Michell *et al.* (1982), Providence (1985), Welch (1985), Goswamy (1986), Washington (1987) and Pal (1989).

Ivories are discussed by Willetts (1963), Lynch (1987) and Okada (1987). Catalogues illustrating ivory figurines and panels include New York (1982), Washington (1985) and Stockholm (1987). For steel weapons, see Walhouse (1878), Grancsay (1937), Goetz (1950), Stone (1961), Rawson (1969), Pant (1980) and Ricketts and Missillier (1988).

7 PAINTING

No exhaustive survey of painting in Southern India exists for this period, though overviews are offered by Sivaramamurti (1968, 1985), Chaitanya (1976), Gururaja Rao (1983) and Dallapiccola (forthcoming). Most publications tend to focus either on mural traditions in temples, or on paintings in public and private collections. An idea of the literary sources for the paintings, as presented in local texts and mythological compendia, may be had from Das (1964), Kulke (1970) and Shulman (1980).

Painted temple ceilings in the Kannada and Telugu zones are discussed by Kotraiah (1958), Karanth (1973), Sivaramamurti (1975) and Sastry (1983). The paintings at Lepakshi have been studied for some time: Sivaramamurti (1936, 1937), Kramrisch (1937), Gopala Rao (1969), Gopalakrishnamurthy (1970) and Pachner (1985).

Temples of the Tamil zone preserve many examples of ceiling and wall paintings.

Those belonging to the Vijayanagara period are described in detail in an unpublished work by Thomas (1979). Later paintings are described by Ramachandran (1934), Paramasivan (1936), Dessigane, Pattabiramin and Filliozat (1960), Chandramurti (1971), Chitra Viji (1978, 1979, 1980), Nagaswamy (1980, 1982, 1986), Kasinathan (1988–9) and Nanditha Krishna (1989).

Though murals in Kerala temples and palaces fall outside the scope of this study, reference may be made to Chitra and Srivinasan (1940), Sivaramamurti (1968), Kramrisch, Cousins and Poduval (1970) and Coffman-Heston (1988).

Painted textiles from the Coromandel coast are examined in Hadaway (1917), Irwin (1956, 1959), Hall (1979), Varadarajan (1981, 1982), Gittinger (1989) and Hurpré *(forthcoming). Catalogues of museum collections and specialised exhibitions of textiles* include Irwin and Hall (1971), Talwar and Krishna (1979), Gittinger (1982), Nabholz-Kartaschoff (1986) and Jain and Aggarwala (1989).

Painted manuscripts and albums from the different regions of Southern India are described in Mittal (1969, 1985), Archer (1970), Appasamy (1980a), Guadalupi (1985) and Jakimowicz-Shah (1988). Among the exhibition catalogues with paintings on paper are Murray (1979), Madison (1984), Ehnbom (1985), Welch (1985), Goswamy (1986), Leach (1986), Stockholm (1987) and Nanditha Krishna (forthcoming). Examples in British collections are listed in Narayanan (1986). Painted portable shrines are illustrated in Cimino (1977), Mallebrein (1984), Mode and Chandra (1985) and Harle and Topsfield (1987).

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